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Sincerely,

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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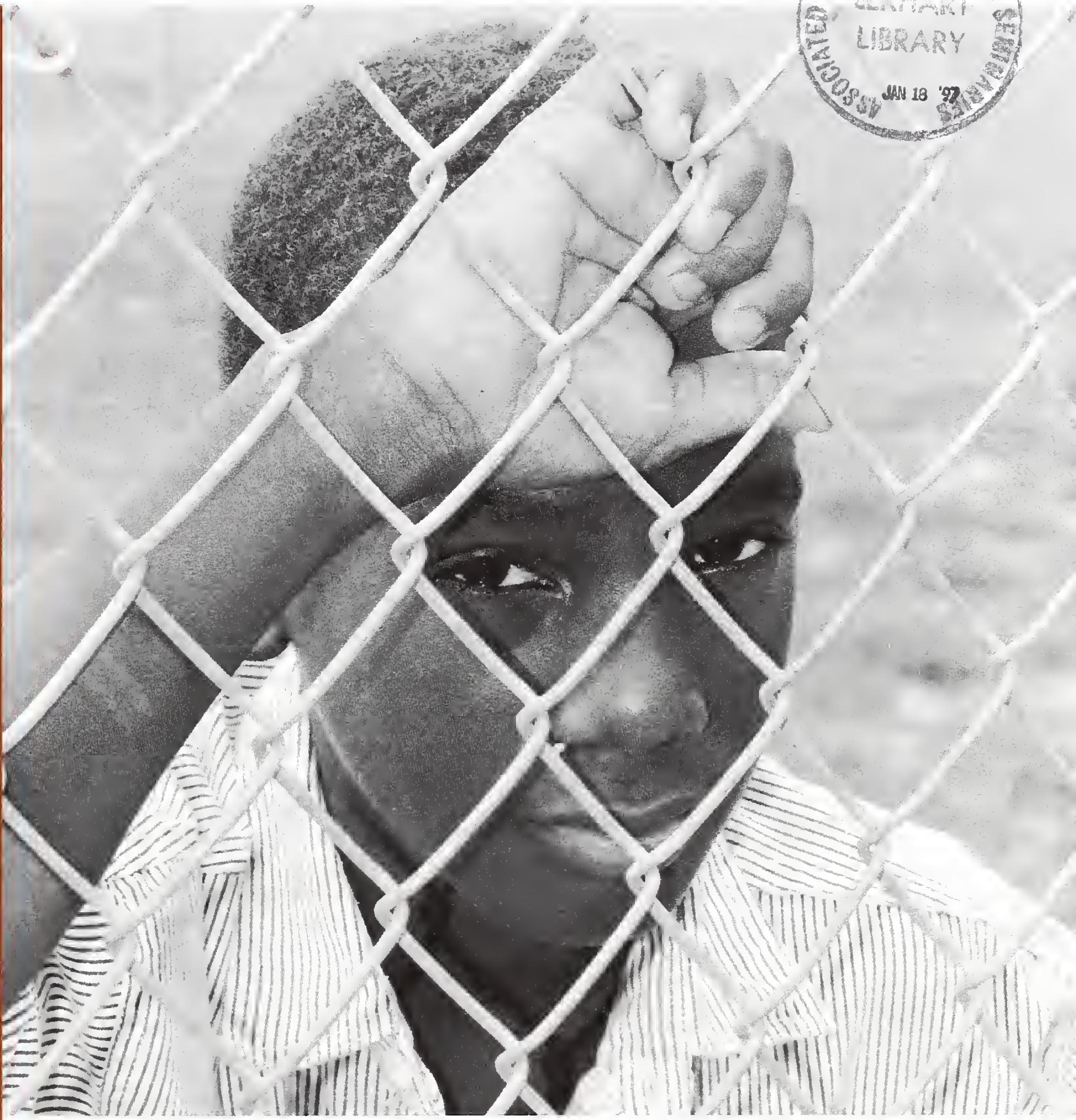


FENCED OUT: dismantling the barriers of racism

Prologue

Every so often, I believe, the Holy Spirit brings an issue to the forefront for the Mennonite church to confront and try to rectify. Four or five years ago, that issue seemed to be the sexual abuse of women. Now it seems to be racism.

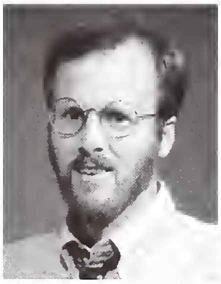
This is an unpleasant topic for many. But the reality of racism is much more unpleasant for the millions of people of color who face its evil presence every day.

The articles in this issue challenge us to look at how we think about and contribute to racism. And they point to ways of working at dismantling this demonic system.

One recent development among Mennonites is a project called Damascus Road, which offers anti-racism training to teams from various Mennonite institutions.

The General Conference Mennonite Church sent a team that included four staff members (including myself) and one board member. We learned about how racism works in institutions as well as individuals, and we worked on long-term goals of dismantling racism in our respective institutions over the next 20 years.

A part of that work is education. Colleges, boards, area conferences and congregations are being trained so that they may teach others. Ask your area conference how your congregation can learn more, or call Mennonite Central Committee U.S. at (717) 859-3889.



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Cover: Photo by Harry Cutting

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Five challenges to the Anabaptist community to work at dismantling racism

Image Productions

MENNONITES AND RACISM: *much work to do*

Jody Miller Shearer

Basic treatment of people of color continues to negate the vision of the new community found in Revelation 7:9. We in the church have much work to do.

Our church and the Amish” unlike other churches do “not preach Negro in this county” (Harry Rexrode, son-in-law of a prominent Mennonite bishop, expressing relief that local congregations were not involved in the emancipation movement. 1865, Goshen, Ind.).

In the 1940s, a group of 25 Mennonite men formed the district 2 number 1 section of the nationalist party of Canada, a pro-Nazi organization. According to Harry Loewen, chair of Manitoba’s coalition against racism and apartheid, “they met regularly to discuss fascism, practice Nazi salutes and distribute and print hard-core hate literature” (*Mennonite Weekly Review*, June 17, 1993).

“If a Negro were truly Christian, they would not come to our church. If they found out that their presence would be offensive to people, they would not come so as not to offend them” (member of Gulfport [Miss.] Mennonite Church, 1950s).

“Sometimes … we clearly control the power, subtle power, like the power of Mennonite prestige, the power of middle-class respectability, the power of whiteness. Can we recommend the way of powerlessness while we dwell comfortably among the powerful?” (Vincent Harding, from address to Eighth Mennonite World Conference, July 23-30, 1967).

After being told that George Bush, while he was vice-president, signed a contract to buy property with a clause that the land could not “be sold, leased or rented to any person other than of the Caucasian race,” several students at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School said, “So what? There’s nothing wrong with that” (Oct. 20, 1993).

“I often have to take people to dinner in the course of my work.

Heckman 04/98

We will need to openly and not defensively learn to talk about who has access to finances, information and priorities.

Inevitably I am seen as somebody who is 'brought along.' When the question of seating preference is addressed the communication is always between the hostess and my guest, who happens most of the time to be white. When the waitress brings the check it is always given to my guest. These [things] I can handle—I have long ago come to terms with the assumed status I am accorded in society because of the color of my skin.

"What I have real difficulty with is going to Mennonite agency offices and feeling invisible for a while. When finally my presence is acknowledged and I am asked who I am there to see ... the reception becomes embarrassing in its extravagance. ... I feel deeply saddened for all the persons of color who every day in countless offices are made to feel invisible or a nuisance and an unwelcome interruption" (Stanley Green, president, Mennonite Board of Missions, Oct. 25, 1993).

This outline of an anecdotal history of responses to racism among Anabaptist communities is by no means complete. For example, I have not referred to the first protest document against slavery signed by three Mennonite men in Germantown, Pa., in the 1700s. Yet these anecdotes identify a significant stream within the Anabaptist tradition. From Harry Rexrode's statement expressing relief that they did not preach Negro in his county to Stanley Green's experience of being invisible in church offices, matters of race have been a stumbling block within Anabaptist congregations.

Of course we need to celebrate the exceptions: Few Mennonites ever owned slaves, there have been periodic attempts to address racism within our church institutions, some of those institutions have worked at increasing ethnic diversity among their staff. These efforts notwithstanding, the overarching theme has been one of crafting beautiful words, declaring the best of our intent, but too often failing in our attempts to remove the barrier of racism.

Witness, for example, the perspective of James Lark, the first African-American bishop in the Mennonite Church. According to Leroy Bechler, author of *The Black Mennonite Church in North America* (Herald Press, 1986), Lark was exasperated with the "slow response of the church" to issues of racism. He repeatedly called for African-Americans to be given access to spiritual and financial power so that they could make decisions on their own. "There've got to be changes made," he maintained.

Since Bishop Lark's death in 1978, a few of those changes have been made, but they continue to fall far short of the vision Lark presented to the church. As the story told by Stanley Green indicates, basic treatment of people of color continues to negate the vision of the new community found in Revelation 7:9. We in the church have much work to do.

In order to address this problem, we need to understand it. In order to begin that process of understanding, I will

The challenge of theology will never be met by wallowing in guilt, burning up with rage or whimpering our way to the cross.

CLEO Photography

briefly present five challenges before the Anabaptist community as we seek to dismantle racism.

History: Anabaptists have treated racism as a "problem of choice," one that could be picked up or put down at will. We have not fully understood how racism deals a blow to our ability to embody the priesthood of all believers. How can the perspectives and presence of the broad spectrum of believers be honored when some sisters and brothers are consistently denied full partnership? At times we have chosen to become involved with the struggle toward inclusion. At times, perhaps more often, we have not.

Almost 100 years after the first African-American was baptized into the Mennonite church, church membership of people of color ranges from 5 to 8 percent, well below the U.S. population average of 25 percent.

Our challenge is to refuse to treat racism as an issue, something we can choose to exclude or include in this year's program. It is not an issue. It is our problem. As deep as sin. In need of grace.

Culture: Closely related to the challenge of history is the challenge of culture. Given our humanity, we will always work out our faith in the context of the culture around us. The problem comes when we begin to suggest that any given form of faith expression defines what it means to be a member of the community. It is the substance that counts, not the form.

The challenge of culture within Anabaptism is the challenge to distinguish between form and substance. That discernment process will not be easy, but it is essential.

Theology: The challenge of theology is in some ways the inverse of the challenge of culture. Too often church theologians have presented their interpretation of Scripture as if it were completely cut off from a cultural context. In particular, European-American theologians (and here I refer to both lay and academic interpreters of the Word) have not been sufficiently transparent in their acknowledgment of the cultural reality framing their discourse.

We can begin to meet this challenge by acknowledging the many rich cultural backgrounds we bring to our study of the Scriptures. In particular, white theologians will need to grapple with the strengths and limitations of perspective that has often been labeled "normal." Too often, whether consciously or not, we have aspired to theological objectivity (which is akin to aspiring to divinity).

The challenge of theology will never be met by wallowing in guilt, burning up with rage or whimpering our way to the cross. Only with equal, open dialogue and mutual critique will we find our way to a place where we bring the best of theological insight to each other as blessings, not as blades.

Science: The Anabaptist community's response to racism has been singularly influenced by the construct of race. Only recently have we begun to understand how fundamental that influence has been. Theologians and laypeople alike have brought to the study of the Scriptures the assumption that God created distinct and universally identifiable races. Sermons on the curse of Ham, the mark of Cain and Paul's household codes have been used to uphold systems of slavery (in the past) and economic inequality (in the present).

While many of these arguments are currently viewed as heterodox, the underlying assumption that there really are such things as biologically determinable races continues to undermine the community. As any student of anthropology will tell you, all attempts to divide humanity by racial groupings have failed miserably.

And so we face a paradox. While we need to continually affirm God's creation of only one race, we must also recognize the diverse richness of culture and ethnicity throughout the world. This challenge does not deny the contributions of science to an analysis of race, but it does hold science's role up to critical examination. In our church history regarding questions of race, science has too often served as the arbiter of final truth.

Power: The challenge power presents will be the most difficult to answer. As Vincent Harding noted over 25 years ago, power is dealt often and ardently within Anabaptist communities. Those who decide who is in and who is out, who gets a voice and who is silenced, who receives resources and who is politely denied them are sometimes influenced more by dollars and demands than by the Spirit and the Scriptures. Race, whether acknowledged or not, also plays a role.

For example, an Anabaptist congregation of color first approached its district conference office for help in securing a $6,000 loan. Rebuffed, the congregation sent out a letter to all the congregations in its district requesting a loan. They needed the money to help pay for building a day-care center that would serve women on welfare seeking retraining and education. No one knew of anyone with that kind of money. Yet a few weeks later a member of the district donated $150,000 to pay outright for a swimming pool at the district's new retreat center.

These inequities will also have to be dealt with. We will need to openly and not defensively learn to talk about who has access to finances, information and priorities. We will need to address power and privilege in a spirit of humility. Answering this challenge will not be easy, but it holds promise for some of the most significant change yet visited upon the church.

I hope one day to be able to write a new anecdotal history of race within the Anabaptist community. My prayer is that it will include stories of courage and grace, stories of dismantling racism, stories of people meeting the challenges of history, culture, theology, science and power.

Jody Miller Shearer is director of the Racism Awareness Program for Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

COLOR BLINDNESS: a racism of denial

This claim of color blindness is a dangerous lie because it is so misleading.

Tudor D. Lance

How often have we heard well-meaning white people say, "I am color blind" or, "I don't see color"? These are good, reconciling words in their intent—they are Christian words that speak of a spiritual ability to set aside "color," or the dividing wall between us, and have fellowship with one another. However, this claim of color blindness is as damaging as any racial slur.

This claim of color blindness is a dangerous lie because it is so misleading. On the surface it appears to represent a mind-set of reconciliation, but actually it inhibits the possibility of reconciliation because it denies the woundedness that racism has perpetrated against people of color. We seem to make the assumption that color is the dividing wall that needs to be disregarded, rather than what we have made color to be. The claim of color blindness denies the experience of racial prejudice and oppression.

The claim of color blindness conveniently avoids the reality of white privilege. I am a white, 44-year-old male. I recognize that I am a member of an oppressor group. I'm not proud of this—it gets in the way of people knowing and trusting me at the most basic levels. Nevertheless, it is a fact of who I am. It is a reality I cannot change no matter how much I want to. It is not a choice I make; I was simply born to it and benefit from it.

This has been hard for me to accept because it distorts how I view myself. I am a child of the 1960s. From the age of 13 I was a strong proponent of civil rights, radical nonresistance and racial equality. Long before I was a Christian, my heroes were those who stood for justice and human equality, the foremost of whom was Martin Luther King Jr. During the 1970s I was a strong supporter of the women's movement and women's struggle for justice and equality. And because of this I believed I was not just a typical white male but an enlightened liberated male. I believed myself to be both gender- and color-blind.

Over the last three decades I have lived with the belief that I am not a part of the brotherhood of typical white males, that I was different and "better." Any comments made about oppressors always applied to someone else. It was my denial that made me dangerous to those I said I cared about.

The truth is—though painful to hear and hard to accept—that the benefits (recognized or not) make us part of a system that perpetuates human injustice and oppression. Although I am not pursuing my privilege, I am born to it; I am a beneficiary, and as a beneficiary I am co-perpetrator of the injustice. It is only as we recognize and accept who we are and our part in the system that we can work to change it.

Colorless conversation: The claim of color blindness also limits the possibility of dialogue between people. Healing comes from understanding and sharing with another in their struggle. A colorless conversation, either out of ignorance or intent, limits the content and depth of the sharing. To deny the social and cultural differences between us is to deceive ourselves and to demean the experience of the person of color, who has suffered so much because of it. Denying it is to perpetuate the injustice—not unlike those who would deny that the Holocaust ever happened. The whole of our personal stories are important: our losses and victories, our struggles and challenges—all are a part of who we are, where we have come from, and what we have been made to be by them.

My own ignorance was embarrassingly revealed one day when I was sharing with a member of our church my incredulity at the experience of not being able to find a room for the night on our way home from a trip to Washington. She told me a similar story. She and a traveling companion ended up in the parking lot of an all-night gas station in California. Then she smiled and told me that it was not because there were no rooms available but because she and her companion were black. This opened my eyes to injustice in a new way. Things I took for granted because of the privilege I enjoy as a white man were painful points of struggle for my black sisters and brothers.

The claim of color blindness ignores

It is only as we recognize and accept who we are and our part in the system that we can work to change it.

the systemic issues of racism; it ignores the need and the responsibility for a shared struggle to dismantle racism. Reconciliation under the shadow of this lie is nothing more than a thin veneer worn only in the presence of some of those "best friends." But how can we call a person "best friend" yet deny their history, deny their experience and how that history has made them who they are?

Interpersonal relationships with people of color can only go as deep as our shared commitment to struggle to overcome and stand against the systemic/institutional racism that dominates our whole American social system.

My best friends feel passionate about the injustice they suffer on a daily basis at the hands of our social systems—and I need to ask myself how I feel about this injustice and what I am willing to do about it.

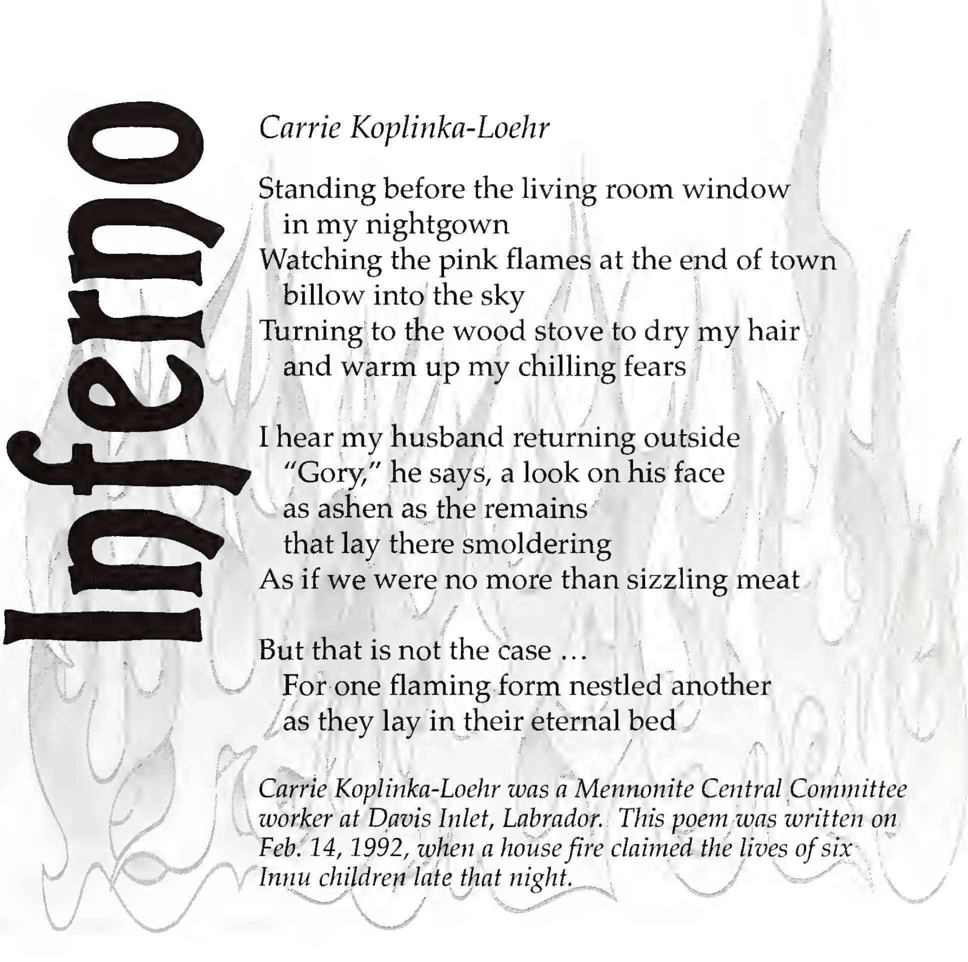
It is true that we must "judge people by the content of their character and not the color of their skin," as Martin Luther King Jr. said. Yet color blindness is not the way to do this. We can only truly know a person by knowing and sharing their pain, their struggle, their success and their victory. And we need to stand with them against the system and be willing to lay down our lives in the process. The barriers that Christ broke down are the ones that have denied people the full benefit of justice, equality and humanity. Only when we lose our life will we gain it.

Reconciliation issues seem to be at the forefront in the church today. The emphasis on racial reconciliation of organizations like Promise Keepers, as well as repentance from the sins of slavery and racism by some denominations have made this issue popular. However, it is dangerous to base our attempts at the "destruction of the dividing wall of hostility" on the lie of color blindness.

We need a strong foundation in Christ, a passion for justice and a commitment to confront our own part in the systemic perpetuation of racial injustice. It will only be in the common struggle for human justice and equality that we will realize a deep and lasting healing.

Tudor D. Lance lives in Fort Wayne, Ind. This article is reprinted from Urban Connections, *Summer 1996.*

Inferno



Carrie Koplinka-Loehr

Standing before the living room window
  in my nightgown
Watching the pink flames at the end of town
  billow into the sky
Turning to the wood stove to dry my hair
  and warm up my chilling fears

I hear my husband returning outside
  "Gory," he says, a look on his face
  as ashen as the remains
  that lay there smoldering
As if we were no more than sizzling meat

But that is not the case ...
  For one flaming form nestled another
  as they lay in their eternal bed

Carrie Koplinka-Loehr was a Mennonite Central Committee worker at Davis Inlet, Labrador. This poem was written on Feb. 14, 1992, when a house fire claimed the lives of six Innu children late that night.

BREAK DOWN THE WALLS

How to build interracial relationships that last

Raleigh Washington and
Glen Kehrein

Remove all the analysis, finger pointing and fear, and America's race problem boils down to this: Despite the victories of the civil rights movement, we have failed to build the kind of personal relationships that lead to racial healing. Education isn't the answer; one can study "ethnic" history forever without touching the bitterness, fear, false perception and distrust that have accumulated over generations of racial separateness.

As friends and co-workers in Chicago's inner city, we've learned some important principles for developing the kind of trusting relationships that can heal today's racial division.

1. Make a commitment: Like marriage, cross-cultural relationships require a commitment that endures conflict and rejects divorce as an option. Commitment and hard work, crucial to marital success, are also essential for solid personal relationships with members of other races.

At least once a month the two of us "rent" a secluded booth at the Original Pancake House. We each come prepared to show the other just how off-base he is. Often we start on opposite ends of an issue, hang in there to hear each other out and don't stop until we end up in accord. Committed to the relationships, we've pledged never to throw in the trump card—announcing, "I quit."

2. Be intentional: When I (Glen) worked at a bank, I noticed something common in "integrated" settings such as college campuses and workplaces—blacks and whites self-segregating at lunchtime. One day I decided to sit with the black employees.

The whites looked at me strangely—as did the blacks. But the latter group accepted me, and I enjoyed the exchange. We always seemed to have more fun and laughter than the quiet, reserved white group.

Racial reconciliation requires an intentional step out of our comfort zone and into the world of those unlike ourselves.

3. Interdependence: Blacks burned by racism, and whites burned by accusations of paternalism, may be inclined toward independence. We need to challenge that inclination by recognizing that we each offer something that the other needs, resulting in equality in the relationship.

Now I (Raleigh) don't know which end of a screwdriver to use or how to restore an abandoned building. But Glen does. As we look toward rebuilding our neighborhoods, we blacks can't be threatened by capable whites who want to contribute.

My strength is communication. I can articulate vision and motivate others. My relational skills have also helped deal with the ruffled feathers, suspicions and assumptions that always arise in cross-cultural settings. Our strengths complement each other, making us an effective team.

4. Sacrifice: Cross-cultural relationships require mutual sacrifice. Sometimes the cost will be small. For

Racial reconciliation requires an intentional step out of our comfort zone and into the world of those unlike ourselves.

Fried-chicken-and-collard-greens man: *Raleigh Washington*

More fun and laughter: *Glen Kehrein* instance, I (Raleigh) am a fried-chicken-and-collard-greens man. Often when I'm invited to dine with white friends, they will serve "health food"—carrot sticks, crackers and cottage cheese. I just eat it and say politely, "This is lovely."

Other times the sacrifice will be greater.

Some black members in our church receive a lot of flak from militant black neighbors for "kissing up to whites." They are called "Oreos": black on the outside but white on the inside. Whites may be labeled "nigger lovers" or just written off as liberal, pinko, social-agitator types.

It's all part of the sacrifice whites and blacks have to make to be reconcilers.

5. Empowerment: This is the heart of racial reconciliation. We empower one another when we repent and forgive, thus liberating each other from bitterness, blame and guilt.

Empowerment involves corporate responsibility. During the Los Angeles riots, many whites in our church expressed grief and shame over the verdict that triggered the violence. Their ownership of corporate guilt freed blacks in the church to forgive and to repent for their own people's part in the destruction.

The freedom that comes from repentance and forgiveness empowers us to love, confront and encourage one another, thus developing the committed cross-cultural relationships needed to achieve reconciliation.

For 10 years we have been partners in the inner city as well as best friends. But our commitment has often been tested by differences in culture, philosophy of ministry and leadership style. Without these five principles, we could never have withstood the constant pressures of crossing cultures and serving the poor. With determination, you'll see that you, too, can build the kind of cross-cultural relationships that provide hope for America's race problem.

Raleigh Washington is senior pastor of Rock of Our Salvation Evangelical Free Church in Chicago. Glen Kehrein is executive director of Circle Urban Ministries. The five principles in this article are condensed from their book, Breaking Down Walls: A Model for Reconciliation in an Age of Racial Strife *(Moody Press). This article is reprinted from* The Reconciler, *Fall 1995.*

Stereotypes and realities of race

True or False

T F

___ ___ 1. You are more likely to be killed by someone you know than by a stranger.

___ ___ 2. Young black males are 20 times more likely than young white females to be a firearm homicide victim.

___ ___ 3. The United States has the highest murder rate of any industrialized country.

___ ___ 4. The U.S. murder rate in 1930 and 1990 were the same.

___ ___ 5. African-Americans are four times more likely than white people to be arrested on drug charges, even though both groups use drugs at almost the same rate.

___ ___ 6. Gang killings represented only 10 percent of homicide deaths in 1993.

___ ___ 7. One child is killed with a firearm every six days.

___ ___ 8. The rate of U.S. federally licensed firearms sellers is 104/100,000 residents.

___ ___ 9. An African-American man is seven times more likely to go to prison than a white man.

___ ___ 10. Ninety-one percent of all drug-related deaths are due to crack cocaine.

___ ___ 11. Blacks make up 76 percent of all illicit drug users, whites 15 percent, Latinos 8 percent.

___ ___ 12. The U.S. government spends $.47 of every tax dollar on the military and only $.30 on education.

Answers: All are true except for (2) **50 times**; (7) six **hours**; (10) due to **alcohol**; (11) whites and blacks should be reversed; (12) education amount is **$.03**.

This information is from the American Friends Service Committee and the World Council of Churches/National Council of Churches Human Rights Campaign. Reprinted from Synapses Messages, *Fall 1994.*

Letters

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The 2,000-year controversy between science and religion is not resolved. This dualism is nothing more than the evolution creation of the consciousness of God in our soul that the gene has enhanced for 1 million years by the genotype, phenotype and environmental interaction.

To resolve this conflict, science needs to concede that there are incomprehensibles in the Christ-created universe that Proverbs, St. John and St. Paul call God. Science tells us that; religion has to concede that the Bible and the Koran are beautiful narratives of metaphors (illustrations) of the Holy Spirit that the gene has been enhancing in our souls for 1 million years. The God connotations of immortality, omnipotence and omniscience of the Bible are the exact qualities of the DNA molecule. Every day we read of how the gene determines our life. The people who speak of the image of God in heaven do not accept evolution genetics. Last October, Pope John Paul II spoke out in support of evolution.

Zoroaster, our most recent ancestor, shows us in the recently identified cave art at Avignon, that 20,000 years ago the evolution of consciousness was doing well. He later put in his findings that all humans ever born on earth have in their genomes the quality of evil and of good (God).

In 400 B.C. (when Moses met God in a cloud of fire on Mt. Sinai), Socrates and Aristotle taught that the God of good and evil evolved in the human soul only. In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas specified Christ-God as the first cause of all creation. In 1963, Albert Schweitzer told me at Lamborene that God can be found in every human soul if one digs down deep enough.

Last November, Gordon Kaufman, an ordained Mennonite minister and for many years professor of religion at Harvard, attended a symposium in his honor at Bethel College with about 20 theologians (Nov. 26 issue, page 13). He proposed that the theology of our culture is constructed of imaginations.

After many years of reading and researching, I am constructing the above dissertation in more detail in book form. *H.R. Schmidt, M.D., North Newton, Kan.*

ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC VIEWS

I appreciate the depth of vision with which your publication presents innovative and alternative views. However, I find the "Fiscal Health" column to be an exception. The financial views presented by J.B. Miller in his column seem to me to reflect the standard economic philosophy of the day—complete with assumptions of the value of personal accumulation, capitalism and participation in our individualistic, consumerist economy.

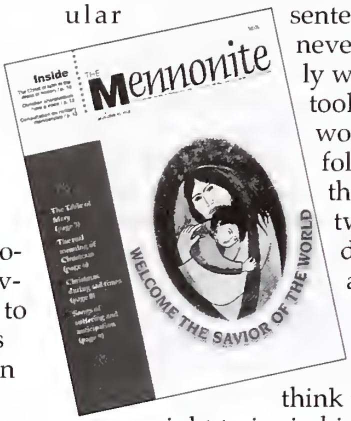
Would we as Anabaptists not benefit more from a perspective that would invite us to something distinctly more meaningful than the perpetual discontentment and obsession with personal acquisition of the prevailing economic ways? We need alternatives to the structures and economic worldview, not just minor adjustments within the system. I feel it would be more in keeping with the nature of *The Mennonite* to offer financial insights from people who actively pursue clearly alternative lifestyles, than from the big business perspective.

I see the "Fiscal Health" column as an isolated exception to the highly respectable and often prophetic material in *The Mennonite*. Much gratitude to the staff of *The Mennonite*, and to others who contribute their writing. *Will Braun, Port Hardy, B.C.*

NOT FOOLISH

I would like to voice my appreciation for the article "Christmas during sad times," in the Dec. 10, 1996, issue of *The Mennonite*.

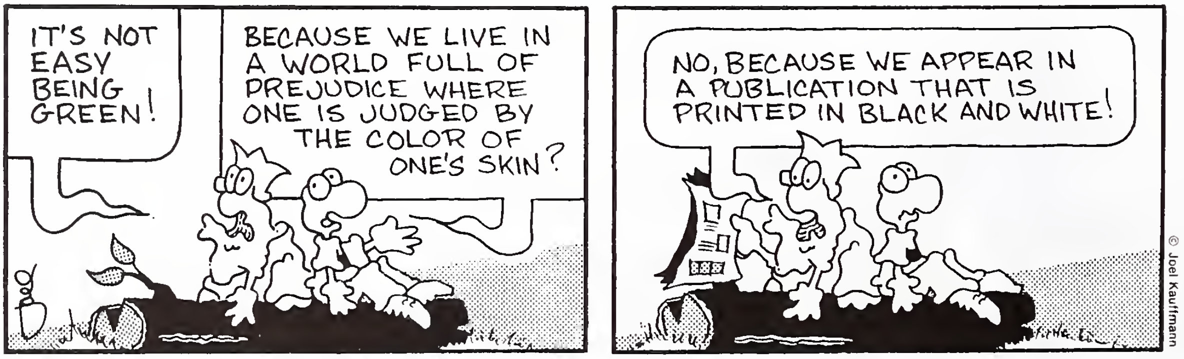
I would also like to make a couple of comments on the article under "Bible" in the same issue. I refer to one particular sentence: "We will never know exactly when this event took place, but it would be sheer folly to conclude that it happened twice or that it didn't happen at all."



1. I do not think it is at all foolish to think that Peter might twice in his life have encountered what seemed a miraculous catch of fish, especially as it occurred at pivotal points in his relationship with Jesus Christ.

2. I may be getting more sensitive as I get older, but I seem to notice more instances in our church periodicals of ridiculing or belittling other believers' beliefs or opinions. It seems to me that calling someone's beliefs or opinions foolish is closely akin to calling them fools, a sin which Jesus condemned strongly (Matthew 5:22). I confess that I too am guilty of this sin. I would like to see intellectual slurs avoided in the brother-sisterhood as we avoid racial or gender slurs. *Elvina N. Martens, Elkhart, Ind.*

Pontius' Puddle


IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN!
BECAUSE WE LIVE IN A WORLD FULL OF PREJUDICE WHERE ONE IS JUDGED BY THE COLOR OF ONE'S SKIN?
NO, BECAUSE WE APPEAR IN A PUBLICATION THAT IS PRINTED IN BLACK AND WHITE!
© Joel Kauffmann

Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity. Write to* The Mennonite, *P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

Children are people, too

Teaching our children about prejudice

Changing prejudicial beliefs takes time.

Denise Preller

Denise Preller is director of God's Little Acre Preschool at North Danvers Mennonite Church, Danvers, Ill., where she is a member.

You are teaching your children to be prejudiced. The minute they are born, the process of transferring your prejudices begins. From innocuous prejudices against certain foods, to the true manifestation of evil present when prejudice is directed toward other people, we are responsible for the burden of prejudice we place on our children.

Luckily for you, I have the "cures" for racism and prejudice:

1. Make friends with and "be in community with" people from diverse racial, age, size, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious backgrounds. "Being in community with" means: live by, have for friends, go to school with, go to church with, do business with, marry.

2. Cleanse all your reading materials (and the reading materials of your children), plus your speech, the speech of anyone you come in contact with, plus all entertainment media (songs, movies, toys) of all gender, age, size, racial, religious and ethnic stereotyping and prejudicial bias.

I'll wait here while you go do that. Back so soon?

The truth is we all know the cures for racism and prejudice. But there are many reasons we don't move toward those cures more aggressively:

1. We are afraid of what we will lose, of facing how we contribute to this sin.

2. It is a lot of work and we don't have the time.

3. We don't see the need and we are comfortable where we are; racism and prejudice don't seem to effect us.

4. We are afraid.

Note: If you are making an effort to implement the cures for racism and prejudice, even if your implementation is vastly incomplete, you will be sending a powerful message to your children. Making some attempt is better than making no attempt at all.

Manageable mountain: Are you looking for a little more manageable mountain to climb than the mountain that implementing the cures for racism and prejudice presents? Good, because so are many of us. The truth is that most of us do not have diverse ranges of friends, and much of what we expose ourselves and our children to contains stereotypical and prejudicial language and imagery.

Children learn early to judge people based on how they look. When asked to draw pictures of "strangers" 3-year-old children will always draw ugly people. They think they know what a "bad guy" (or "bad gal") looks like. Unfortunately, "bad guys," people who are likely to do evil to children, look like everyone else. In fact, they can even be beautiful. But you would be hard pressed to convince a child of that.

> ***Every time a person is judged "good" or "bad" based solely on their looks, we are all diminished.***

We must be intentional about teaching our children (convincing them) that you cannot judge people based on how they look or talk. They need to believe, not just say, that all people are unique and special human beings created by God in God's image.

You cannot order someone (even a child) to stop believing something or to start believing something. Changing prejudicial beliefs takes time and many reinforcing experiences.

To begin this process:

1. Evaluate your children. Sit down with your children and some preselected photographs. (Pick photos that represent a variety of ages, racial groups and genders and try to be balanced about facial expression, smiling vs. not smiling.) Ask your children to tell you what they know about the different people based on the pictures. Questions like:

- Is this a good person or a bad person? Do you know? How do you know?
- What does this person do all day?
- Would you want to spend time with this person?
- Should we invite this person to dinner?
- Should we hire this person to be your teacher?

Do not censor or correct your children at this time. Just let them talk. This is a time for you to collect information about where they have already begun to develop prejudices. (A child with no prejudices will answer to all such questions, "I don't know.")

2. Take time to reflect about what you have discovered.

- What are the prejudices your children are exhibiting?
- Where are some possible sources of support for those prejudices coming from? (Parents, school, television, books, church?)

3. Begin to take some corrective measures as a parent. Focus on developing experiences for your child designed to combat the most pronounced prejudices you discovered. For example, if your child insists elderly people are old and sick and can't remember stuff, take them to a dance put on by a senior citizen's ballroom dance group.

Remember that

- a prejudice that someone is good based on how they look is just as harmful as a prejudice that someone is bad based on how they look.
- Every time a child is ridiculed because of their race, we are all diminished.
- Every time the "better looking" person gets the job, we are all diminished.
- Every time a child trusts a "handsome" stranger, we are all diminished.
- Every time a person is judged "good" or "bad" based solely on their looks, we are all diminished.

Profile

The pilgrimage of a '60s 'radical'

John Powell returned to the Mennonite church after he and it changed.

Tom Price

As John Powell looked at his fellow Mennonite urban workers, the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) staff consultant for urban leadership addressed them in his soft-spoken manner.

"Some of you know my history. Some have said it has been a checkered history, some have said a radical history," said John at a Nov. 8, 1996, meeting of urban ministry directors at Goshen (Ind.) College. "Most people have said, 'I'm glad you're back.' I have heard by the way of the grapevine, 'Why did he come back? I wish he hadn't come back.'"

John returned to MBM in 1994 to work in church development after a 20-year absence.

In 1968, MBM named him executive secretary of what came to be known as the Minority Ministries Council. The interracial group was formed "to give the minorities of the Mennonite Church a greater voice in decision-making and overall strategy of the church as it works in minority and/or urban situations," according to a July 1970 annual report.

"The Minority Ministries Council must become a body challenging all forces in the Mennonite brotherhood," John said then. From that forum within church leadership, he worked at promoting racial understanding and "attacking white racism in our church."

In August 1969, at the Mennonite Church's biennial assembly at Turner, Ore., John was asked to give a presentation on the Black Manifesto. This had been delivered to the nation's churches three months earlier, in May, with sit-ins at and seizures of church institutions, including the offices of the National Council of Churches. James Foreman, leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, had called for $500 million from American churches and synagogues, saying, "Fifteen dollars for every black brother and sister in the United States is only the beginning of the reparations due us as a people who have been exploited and degraded, brutalized, killed and persecuted."

Even with the nature of the times, John's approach was not nearly so radical. "I did not say Mennonites should give money to the Black Manifesto for general distribution but rather provide resources to minority Mennonite congregations so those communities could effectively minister to their communities," he says.

Christy Risser (MBM)

John called for the creation of a Compassion Fund, which by 1974 had received more than $150,000 in contributions but still failed to get "the kind of response we had hoped."

"Tried by fire": However, some at that 1969 presentation reacted to it with a prejudice that began what John now calls "a period of being tried by fire."

"If I do what John Powell says I should do, the next thing you'll know they will have me out of my pulpit and a nigger in there," one pastor said.

Between 1969 and 1974, John worked "to be a conscience, to make sure we were doing what we said we would be doing." On occasions, he noted a disparity between faith and action, such as when a Chicago congregation was forced to close its doors temporarily because it did not receive funds promised by the church.

"This was the first time the Mennonite Church had ever been really introduced to having someone of a color other than that designated as white speaking to them in such a forthright manner. I was the first minority person to work within the Mennonite Church structure," John says. "I was still young; I had all the answers, by the way. The church also had all the answers. Unfortunately, the answers both of us had were not congruent."

John left MBM in June 1974 after being "restructured out" when the Minority Ministries Council was disbanded to make room for the new General Board's Minority Affairs Committee, a precursor to the Black Council, Black Caucus and African-American Mennonite Council.

> ***"I was still young; I had all the answers, by the way. The church also had all the answers. Unfortunately, the answers both of us had were not congruent."***
>
> ***John Powell***

"I left kind of angry," says John, who became director of the American Friends Service Committee's Michigan office in Ann Arbor. "I left saying I would never come back."

John Powell did come back. But first he experienced "a time of tempering."

"I grew up Baptist," says John, "so I have always said from the beginning I was John the Baptist before I was John the Anabaptist." He found himself traveling in Quaker and United Church of Christ circles. "Both were good experiences, but I still felt a longing."

His campaign to force the University of Michigan to divest of its holdings in South Africa led to his being fired from a position there. He had traveled to Africa in the early 1970s "during my tenure at MBM [when] I was looking for my identity as an African-

American person."

In 1985, John traveled to the Soviet Union. While preaching at a Methodist church, "I found myself lying prostrate before the congregation, not knowing what was going on," he says. "The Spirit basically had caught me. When I came back from that experience, there was something different about me."

John also saw something different about the Mennonite Church and MBM. "What I discovered was a new cadre of leaders that was beginning to emerge to talk about a new vision for our urban centers," he says. "I began to move myself back into the periphery of that group of people—just on the edge. I wanted to make sure it was for real."

As he looked closely, John saw "a bottom-up vs. a top-down model" of leadership as well as people "backing up what they said with actions." He saw leaders who exhibited a concern for people's hurts along with "a passion for church growth, a passion for the lost."

Through Brent Foster, former MBM staff person and now co-pastor at Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., and others, John "found I was re-evangelized into the network."

Do I want to go back into a possible den? John asked himself. "The den may be a den, but it is a different kind of a den. The den that is there is one that has everyone participating as equals, everyone participating as brothers and sisters in the process."

John says he realized he "wasn't the problem" back in the late 1960s, while acknowledging "it may have been both sides." But he also noticed the way people reached out to him.

"With all my weaknesses and all the sins I had, people were ready to say, 'I love you and I'm willing to work with you,'" he says.

Today, John through MBM's Evangelism and Church Development office provides resources for urban church planting and the development of leaders to serve the congregations.

"This is where I want to be," he says. "The things I see happening now excite me. I am invigorated not only by my transition but by the transition the church has made and the transition MBM has made."

Tom Price directs corporate communications for Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

Bible

Affirmative Acts

The Book of Acts teaches us to fight the battle against racism.

J. Daryl Byler

One sure way to spark a lively discussion is to mention the "R" word. From the O.J. Simpson trial to Supreme Court rulings on affirmative action and voter redistricting, the issue of racism evokes strong emotions. For some, feelings of guilt or defensiveness. For others, pain or anger.

In his book *Enter the River* (Herald Press, 1994), Jody Miller Shearer defines racism as "race prejudice plus power." Like a veteran NFL linebacker blitzing a rookie quarterback, racism holds both a prejudicial attitude and the power to act in ways that harm others. That makes racism especially problematic in our society with its huge power imbalances—political, social and economic.

From a biblical and theological perspective, racism violates the great inseparable commandments: to love God completely and to love one's neighbor as oneself (Mark 12:29-31). Racism denies the image of God in each person (Genesis 1:27). Racism mocks the work of Christ in overcoming the walls that separate people (Ephesians 2:14-16). And, contrary to Jesus' teaching, racism abuses power in relationships (Mark 10:41-45).

While there is room in the church for disagreement over the merits of specific legislative responses to racism, there is no room for the ongoing practice of racism. Racism is sin. White supremacists do not alone crowd the road of racism. It is a journey for all who hold power and privilege.

The church must practice affirmative acts in leading the battle against racism. Such actions flow freely from the presence of God's Spirit in our midst. But they also take some effort.

The Book of Acts reports that diverse believers—including leaders—chose to share power and resources (2:44-45), worship together (2:46a), eat in one another's homes (2:46b), recognize the gifts of each person (6:1-10), go into one another's neighborhoods (8:5-25), confess old stereotypes (11:18) and open themselves to new patterns of being and doing church (15:1-35). Such acts affirmed convincingly the reconciling power of Christ's love—a love that transcends national, ethnic and racial differences.

Ignorance and superiority: Racism is overcome only as we risk close friendships. In my own journey against racism, African-American friends have embraced me as I have fumbled to reach out. They have patiently responded to my words and actions that have sometimes reeked of ignorance and superiority. My friends have been vulnerable enough to allow me to see life through their eyes.

The new *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, adopted by the delegates at Wichita '95, suggests two ways that we witness to the nations: "by being that 'city on a hill' which demonstrates the way of Christ ... [and by] calling the nations ... to move closer toward justice, peace and compassion for all people."

Let the church renew her commitment to affirmative acts.

The affirmative acts of the church will have the greatest impact on overcoming racism. But legislative responses are also appropriate and important.

Few of us would want to eliminate speed limits or criminal laws simply because they have failed to end speeding or crime. While legislation will not eradicate racism—and may even create some new challenges—many laws at least help curb the harmful impacts of racism. And they remind us of the standards of equality and justice to which we aspire.

Let the church renew her commitment to affirmative acts. But let her not neglect also to nudge the nation toward greater measures of justice, peace and compassion for all people.

J. Daryl Byler is director of Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office.

News

The Oklahoma Mennonite Relief Sale, held Nov. 29-30, 1996, in Fairview, raised $79,000 for Mennonite Central Committee in spite of a six-inch snowfall. The feature quilt, made of a block each from 42 Oklahoma churches, sold for $1,000. The top-selling quilt went for $3,200. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Mennonite Disaster Service will hold its all-unit meeting Feb. 7-8 at the Trotter Convention Center in Columbus, Miss. The meeting will be followed by Sunday worship and a meal with members of Mount Zoar Baptist Church in Boligee, Ala., which MDS helped to rebuild after it was burned in early 1996. For information and registration materials, call (717) 859-2210.

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The World Council of Churches has declared 1997 as the Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People, reports *Ecumenical Courier*. The WCC is urging churches to study and affirm a 1995 statement titled "A Moment to Choose: Risking to Be with Uprooted People." (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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***Seeds* magazine reports that Don March, a food bank employee from Cadillac, Mich., vowed to walk from food bank to food bank around the perimeter of the United States in a year and a half. He began the journey in Portland, Ore., on Feb. 23, 1995. He wanted the journey to help call attention to domestic hunger issues. March, 61, carried little with him, sleeping outdoors or in homeless shelters. He has reported that people have been generally kind and he has received gifts of new shoes, a backpack and a tent along the way. He said his secret source of energy for the trek was a high-energy drink he concocted of chocolate milk mixed with Dr. Pepper. (*Christian Living*)**

MCC Canada braces for major changes

Winnipeg (Meetinghouse)—As storm clouds of change loom on the horizon, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada board spent its 1996 annual meeting examining its audience and clarifying its future.

The meeting, held Nov. 28-29, 1996, at Douglas Mennonite Church, was the last one before MCC Canada undergoes restructuring, causing the national organization to shrink and the provincial MCCs to grow.

The 37 board members spent most of their time studying data collected from audience research, as well as looking at MCC Canada's "five-year plan," the revised relationship with MCC binational and MCC U.S., and role clarification within MCC Canada.

MCC Canada commissioned a study of Mennonites and the general public in Manitoba. Research results were presented in a written report and by way of a dramatic reading. The study showed that in Manitoba, MCC has three different types of supporters, that more than half the general public has heard of MCC and that one-third share many of the same values as Mennonites surveyed (see related story).

Aiden Schlichting Enns

Faces of MCC: *Lori Unger Brandt and David Wall portray two typical people who support Mennonite Central Committee in Canada. The MCC Canada board, at its annual meeting, spent much of the time looking at results of a constituent study done in Manitoba.*

Five-year plan: The executive committee has proposed a five-year plan for MCC Canada beginning in September. The four-page document outlines mission, program directions and budget parameters. The plan proposes that most of the cuts come from Canadian programs and human resources.

MCC Canada executive director Marv Frey said that this document is "trying to bring closure to a process that's been going on for some time."

Almost all discussion of the plan centered on MCC Canada's Native Concerns program, which currently has two full-time staff.

"I have a major concern here," said Conference of Mennonites in Canada board representative Margot Fieguth, Mississauga, Ont. After hearing the Native ministers speak at the moderator's conference before the annual meeting, it was obvious that they trust MCC and not other organizations, she said.

"I feel that this is a time when they need people that they can trust in. This is the wrong time for us to say, 'Sorry, folks.' ... That whole Native situation troubles me."

Frey said the national program tends to get a lot of exposure: "Sometimes we're not seeing what's happening at the provincial level."

Native Concerns programs have grown in all the provincial MCCs. Representatives from each province shared what they were doing in this area. Walter Franz, Winnipeg, expressed appreciation for the provincial work but added, "I have a concern that this really be addressed at the national level."

The executive committee plans to spend three full days on the five-year plan before presenting it for adoption to the board next November.

Roundtable created: Board members accepted a revision of their "Memorandum of Understanding" with MCC binational and MCC U.S. New is the creation of an "inter-MCC roundtable." Senior staff from each of the 12 MCCs will meet annually to coordinate their efforts. Right now, "we work together in an ad hoc way," said Frey. "There's a sense that we need to formalize that more ... to make sure we are all singing off the same page." The new memo also increases the number of representatives from MCC Canada to MCC binational from eight to 10.

The board passed a motion to "clarify" the roles of members within MCC Canada. The executive committee is now called the "board of directors," and the membership body is now called the "delegate body."

Treasurer Abe Wiebe, Winkler, Man., reported that MCC Canada's constituent income was better than expected, with $6.5 million budgeted and $7.36 in contributions received from constituency.

However, Ten Thousand Villages (formerly Self-Help Crafts) earned only 74 percent of its budget. Some staff were let go, and operations will continue to be monitored, said Wiebe.

The board passed a total budget of $20 million for 1997, down slightly from last year. Salaries for some MCC Canada staff are being reduced with the aim of bringing more equality with the provincial MCCs.

Marv Frey's term was extended to December 1999. *Aiden Schlichting Enns, Manitoba provincial editor for* Mennonite Reporter

Inside the news

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Rebels heading toward Zairian Mennonites / p. 17

Native pastor incorporates culture, Christianity / p. 18

MCC supporters in three groups

Winnipeg—As Mennonite Central Committee Canada faces a future shaped by major restructuring, it is taking a careful look at constituency and potential constituency.

In the spring of 1996, a private research company made phone calls to 500 people selected from the general public and 300 members of Mennonite churches in Manitoba.

Survey questions dealt with general social issues and/or issues in which MCC is directly involved. The questions usually asked respondents to "agree" or "disagree."

Researchers found Mennonites shared a number of common values. For example, 80 percent agreed that people should share with the poor, believe in God, do volunteer work and spend less on self to give more to others.

The research showed that MCC supporters tended to fall into three distinct groups. Members of the first have the most progressive views on social issues. These supporters are equally male and female, urban and rural, and are more likely to have a post-secondary education, to have lived outside of Canada and to have done volunteer work.

The second group is more likely to be female and rural and not have post-secondary education and the third to be male and live in rural areas. Both these groups are more conservative on social issues.

"I recognize constituency in all three [categories]," said Ray Brubacher, St. Albert, Alta.

Three board members performed in a reader's theater written by MCC staffer Kathleen Hull to put faces on the three groups. Lori Unger Brandt, Rosthern, Sask., played the role of Beth Janzen, a typical person in the first group.

"I fit into my character rather well," Brandt said. "I'm young, a student. This [MCC as seen by Beth] is true Christianity at work and this is where so many young people are at in their faith."

The survey also found significant overlap between Mennonites and the general public. Research showed that 33 percent of the general public shares many values with the Mennonites surveyed.

"Whose constituency are they?" asked Eric Rempel, Niverville, Man. "Should we make an attempt to draw them in?"

MCC Canada director of media relations John Longhurst said there are many people who have high regard for MCC, but "we do not provide these people with an opportunity to give to us."

The research showed that 54 percent had heard of MCC and 37 percent held a positive view of it.

"I would have thought that MCC would have had a much higher recognition level," said Harold Jantz, Winnipeg. Longhurst responded that a group like the Salvation Army (100 percent of the public had heard of it; 90 percent were positive about it) does all its work domestically, often in uniform, which assures high visibility. MCC, on the other hand, does much of its work overseas. *Aiden Schlichting Enns*

The 30th annual Mennonite Sale and Auction will be held in Fresno, Calif., April 4-5 at Fresno Pacific College. For more information, contact the Mennonite Central Committee office at 101 G St., Reedley, CA 93654; (209) 638-6911.

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Lucia Unrau, associate professor of music at Bluffton (Ohio) College, is searching for solo piano works by Christian composers. Unrau is an active performing pianist who plans to present such works during the 1997-98 academic year. Her preference is for piano music in which Christian philosophy and ideas, particularly peace and Anabaptism, are somehow central to either the music or the composer's aesthetic vision. Deadline for submission is Feb. 1. Contact Lucia Unrau at (419) 358-3318; e-mail unraul@bluffton. edu.

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Asian-Americans, whose numbers have increased from 1.5 million in 1970 to nearly four times that in 1990, comprise the United States' fastest-growing minority group. Among registered voters, 76 percent of Asian-Americans cast ballots in 1994, compared with 73 percent of whites, 64 percent of Latinos and 63 percent of blacks. They are a politically diverse group, with Democrats outnumbering Republicans only slightly and a large number of registered Independents. (*Reconcilers*)

Women in the military experience sexual harassment twice as often as women in civilian workplaces, reports the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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The Goshen (Ind.) College *Record* reports that 15 members of the college's Pax Club signed a basic food-and-clothes agreement to show solidarity with those for whom a simple diet and wardrobe are a way of life. For one month the students allotted themselves seven shirts, three pairs of pants, three skirts, two pairs of shoes, a sweater, jacket or coat, gloves and a hat. Most examined their diets for processed foods, sugars and other "luxury" foods and made changes accordingly. Some are washing their clothes by hand and cutting their own hair. The students hope that their current choices will lead to permanent future lifestyle changes. (*Gospel Herald*)

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Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and the Mennonite Brethren Study Center at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan., will host "The Mennonite Experience in America: A Celebration and Look Forward" April 25-26 with events on both campuses. The conference will celebrate the completion of the four-volume series "The Mennonite Experience in America." Herald Press of Scottdale, Pa., has recently published Vol. 4 by Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*. Speakers at the conference will include the four authors of the MEA volumes: Richard MacMaster, Theron Schlabach, James Juhnke and Toews. For further information contact Jim Juhnke at Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117; (316) 283-2500; e-mail jjuhnke@bethelks.edu.

Irish peacemakers see efforts crumble

Akron, Pa. (MBM/MCC)—Relationships between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland are at an all-time low, says a Mennonite-related church worker there.

Joe Campbell, who coordinates both Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) work in Ireland, finds this news especially discouraging.

MCC and MBM programs in Ireland focus on conflict mediation and Christian peacemaking in congregations and local communities, with direction from an ecumenical Irish support group.

Campbell and his colleagues were elated when the various armed groups in Northern Ireland agreed to and carried through on a cease-fire for 17 months, October 1994 to February 1996. Many believed "the Troubles" of 26 years were at an end.

But the peace proved fragile. The cease-fire ended with an Irish Republican Army bombing in London in February. Violence erupted again this summer on Irish soil when members of the Orange Order, a Protestant fraternity, insisted on marching through Catholic communities to celebrate a Protestant military victory over Catholics more than 300 years ago.

Wayne Gehman (MBM)

"The search for peace is hard work, demanding the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the love of Christ."

Joe Campbell

Now Catholics are boycotting some 150 businesses owned by Orange Order members in "border" areas, Campbell relates. In Belfast, 10-foot walls divide some Catholic and Protestant communities, while in rural areas, demarcations may be rivers, fields, even a fork in the road.

"My fear is that before long, largely Protestant towns will strongly counter-boycott small Catholic businesses, further driving people apart," Campbell says. These actions are not just damaging economies "but are fracturing across religious lines, friendships built up over generations," he says.

On Nov. 28, Campbell met with 20 clergy—17 Protestant and three Catholic—who work in Northern Ireland's rural central area, to help them plan small steps to heal divisions. They began by telling stories of pain and hurt from their ministries.

One pastor told Campbell that he must plan church meetings around gatherings of the local Orange Order lodge. "He told me some of his church members are currently more loyal to the lodge than to their Lord. They see the lodge, rather than church leaders, as defenders of their Protestant heritage," says Campbell.

Another said that at a recent church meeting one person wanted to write a clause into a church construction contract that would keep the builder from subcontracting to Catholic businesses.

This summer Campbell and colleague Brendan McAllister of the Mediation Network for Northern Ireland stopped their work of promoting tolerance within the Belfast police force. Their decision came after police reversed a prohibition of Orange Order members from marching through a Catholic district.

"We withdrew because the police acted in a one-sided and heavy-handed way toward the Catholic community. Our resuming work with them will depend on how seriously they take the need for retraining officers in the force, which is 94 percent Protestant," Campbell says.

After a tough year of seeing patient peace-building efforts crumble, Campbell remarks that "the search for peace is hard work, demanding the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the love of Christ.

"If outright violence begins anew in the coming weeks—as seems likely—we will need all of the resources God gives God's people," he adds. *MCC Information Services*

Songs of praise, words of peace

Wayne Gehman

Students at a Bible seminar in Cotonou, Benin, clap while singing an African hymn. Mennonite Board of Missions worker Rodney Hollinger-Janzen directs the program, which provides the only systematic Bible training available to pastors in the African Independent Churches. Recently, one village pastor told how members of the Oro society attacked his church and violently wrested drums, shakers and gongs from the musicians. Although some of the church members wanted to retaliate, the pastor urged them to leave the response to God. "For two years, the Oro society humiliated the Christians by using the church's percussion instruments to call people to their meetings. The Christians' only response was prayer," the pastor said. "Then one day, the king of the village called the church leaders to his palace. He told them that everyone in the entire kingdom was praising them because of their peaceful ways." Rodney and Lynda Hollinger-Janzen say, "We are thankful that the Bible students are not only looking for a diploma but are eager to put new understandings into practice." ***Tom Price***

Rebels heading toward Zairian Mennonites

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee workers in Africa's Great Lakes region—Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire—report that as of late November, Zairian rebels controlled about one-sixth of Zaire and were heading closer to the provinces where many Zairian Mennonites live.

Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya, MCC workers who left Bukavu, Zaire, in October 1996, are now back in eastern Zaire planning for the distribution of the 50,000 blankets MCC has been collecting in North America. The blankets are expected to arrive in Bukavu by March.

Rigalo and Lumeya also hope to learn the fate of the Rwandan refugees who had lived in four MCC-supported camps around Bukavu. For the past two months, since Zairian rebels took over the Bukavu area, the refugees have been "missing." MCC workers fear the Interahamwe (Rwandan militia) have taken the refugees hostage.

The two workers will also check on ongoing MCC work in Bukavu, including forestry and peace programs. Despite the fighting, Zairians continued to work in the MCC tree nurseries.

About 90 percent of Zaire's estimated 140,000 Mennonites live in Kasai Oriental, Kasai Occidental and Bandundu—three provinces that are bracing for the possibility of the arrival of rebels opposing the Mobutu government in Zaire.

Zairian Mennonites have seen other localized rebellions against the government in the past. But many are worried about the potential for violence in the current situation, particularly if Zairian troops engage the rebels. Some are also concerned that Mennonite youth may be sympathetic to the rebels' cause.

At the request of church leaders, MCC is sending Juan Jose Romero and Neil Blough to Zaire in February to conduct mediation and peace theology workshops. Romero is director of the Brussels Mennonite Peace Center; Blough is a Mennonite Board of Missions missionary in Paris.

Zaire's civil war has affected the entire region. In Burundi, MCC workers report an increase in killing, including 300 Hutu refugees recently murdered in a church. The two MCC workers there continue to hold peace and trauma healing workshops. *MCC Information Services*

Rachel Pannabecker, curator of cultural history and collections manager of the Kauffman Museum in North Newton, Kan., since 1984, has been named the museum's director.

• • •

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who is leading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigating human rights abuses committed during the apartheid era in that country, said the United States could use a similar truth-seeking process to improve race relations among Americans. Tutu was speaking at a news conference following an address he gave Nov. 17, 1996, at Howard University in Washington. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

• • •

Menno-Fest, an event celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons, was held Oct. 27, 1996, on the campus of Bluffton (Ohio) College and drew hundreds of Mennonites from western Ohio. Events included a presentation of music composed and arranged by Mennonites. More than 500 people ate a fellowship meal of "Mennonite stew," which had been cooked in a large copper kettle over a wood fire. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

• • •

An event called "Making Friends Through Story and Song: Many Pieces Becoming One Peace" attracted 145 children to Bluffton (Ohio) College last November. The conference was sponsored by the Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center, the Ohio Mennonite Conference of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church. For one of the weekend's activities, the children helped to piece a quilt that was then auctioned to raise money to help support the event.

Quotes on race

Every white person participates in and benefits from the system of racism, even if it is against our will. *Joseph Barndt,* Dismantling Racism

To be white in America is not to have to think about it. *Robert Terry,* For Whites Only

Color pigment is to be found in the dermis, and is a substance called melanin. Melanin is usually black, although some granules of it are as light as bright yellow. The color of the skin is determined not by the color of the pigment so much as by the quantity of it—the same coloring matter, in different amounts, colors the skin of all races. The same pigments also color the eyes and the hair.

In a study of Swedish army recruits of 40 years ago ... five "Nordic traits" were taken, and it was discovered that fewer than 10 percent of the recruits had all the traits. ... Similar studies were made in Switzerland. Six percent of the Swiss recruits were "pure" Alpine racial types. No more than 6 percent fit the stereotype. *Paul Bohannan,* Social Anthropology

Dividing people by the amount of melanin in their skin and then asserting that this correlates with intelligence or behavior patterns makes no more sense than suggesting that intelligence correlates with one's blood type—which certainly constitutes a more fundamental physical difference. As Erika Vora notes, "About 95 percent of DNA molecules are identical for all human beings. The remaining 5 percent are responsible for all the differences in appearance. ... The differences that do exist between [races] are few and for the most part superficial." *Donald S. Will,* Teaching Peace Through Debunking Race

Native pastor incorporates culture, Christianity

Gretna, La. (MBM)—Melanie Domangue describes with pride how her 2-year-old son, Brandon, last winter was named "Spirit Dancer" in a Christian baby dedication patterned after an ancient Indian child-blessing ceremony.

Domangue descends from the Houma tribe. Her parents and relatives were told that, in order to become Christian, they must cease to be Indian.

"Any religion that tells me I shouldn't pursue my culture, my heritage ..., I would be afraid of it," she says.

Domangue's faith now is rooted in her hopes, rather than her fears, as she participates in the new Native Christian Fellowship here. With cell groups for Bible study and prayer in the bayous around Houma, La., and in the urban areas near New Orleans, this congregation allows aboriginal people to come to Christ without leaving their inner selves at the church door.

Tom Price

Indigenous theology: *Steve Cheramie Risingsun, right, pastor of Native Christian Fellowship, talks with Houma tribal leaders Sidney and Mandy Verdin of Isle de Jean Charles, La.*

"There is a need in the Indian community to allow them to be Indians but also to allow their Christian faith to be expressed through their Native customs and a need to develop an indigenous theology among the Native cultures," says Steve Cheramie Risingsun, chair of the Houma tribe and pastor of Native Christian Fellowship.

With support from Mennonite Board of Missions, the Gulf States Mennonite Conference, United Native Ministries Council and the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council, Risingsun is developing a new, distinctly Anabaptist model for an Indian church.

Risingsun studies traditional Indian ceremonies and practices to see which he can use with good conscience in a Christian congregation. The baby dedication ceremony he guided for Brandon Domangue incorporated elements of Houma tribal heritage that Risingsun believes point to Jesus.

This approach directly contrasts that of many Protestant churches, including a non-denominational congregation Risingsun once served as associate pastor. The requirements imposed upon Native people who wanted to become Christians were "asking them to deny their culture" and remove almost everything (Indian) from their lives, Risingsun says.

"We just don't feel it is [constructive] to leave that cultural void in their lives," Risingsun says.

Native Christian Fellowship now averages about 40 people, ages 13 to 55, in its meetings on Sunday mornings and Tuesday nights in West Bank, a New Orleans area neighborhood.

This location will provide one of two "hubs" for prayer and Bible study cell groups that will meet in urban homes. The other hub, based about 50 miles away in Houma, will draw many of the Houma-Chitimacha people who live in tiny, impoverished bayou communities, such as Isle de Jean Charles.

This cell-based model nicely complements the social structures in Indian communities, where every village historically has its own ceremonial leaders.

"I see myself as a church developer, gathering together many types of community cell groups," Risingsun says.

Risingsun and others are developing a philosophy of ministry, seeking to develop teaching materials about such cultural items as the sweat lodge, the pipe, the stomp dance and menstruation practices.

"I am fully aware of the dark side of our culture. ... I am also aware that is not the whole story," Risingsun says.

As Risingsun seeks to proclaim the gospel to his people, he keeps in mind people like Melanie Domangue and her relatives, who she said "were impressed" by the child dedication service.

"That's one of our targets," says Risingsun, "to help our Indian people who want to keep their spirituality and keep their culture and don't feel like they have to choose to have one or the other." *Tom Price*

Record

COM—Commission on Overseas Mission
MBM—Mennonite Board of Missions
MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
VS—Voluntary Service

MINISTERS

Darrell Bender was licensed Sept. 29 as youth/young adult pastor at Ottawa (Ont.) Church.

Amanda Falla was ordained and commissioned, with her husband, **Gamaliel**, for COM work in their native Colombia Dec. 8, 1996. The Fallas left for Colombia Dec. 23.

Edwin Funk ended as pastor at Wingham Church, Elm Creek, Man.

Randy Grieser was installed as assistant pastor of Grace Church, Steinbach, Man., Sept. 22.

Ed Janzen was ordained Oct. 20 as youth pastor at Grace United Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

George and **Martha Janzen** are associate pastors at Cedar Valley Church, Mission, B.C.

Brian Laverty is pastor at Kitchener-Waterloo (Ont.) House Church II.

Sue Steiner is interim pastor at Nith Valley Church, New Hamburg, Ont.

Tanya Dyck Steinmann is youth pastor at First Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Elfrieda and **Jake Thielman** are pastors at West Abbotsford (B.C.) Church.

Jake Tilitzky is interim pastor at Bethel Church, Aldergrove, B.C.

Kim Wideman is youth pastor at Poole Church, Milverton, Ont.

WORKERS

Kristin Borntrager, Harlan (Ky.) Fellowship, has begun a one-year VS term with MBM as a health educator with Midwest Migrant Health Information Office in Harlingen, Texas.

Harley and **Sue Eagle**, Port Hardy (B.C.) Fellowship, are beginning three-year MCC terms in Pine Ridge, S.D. Harley will be a sports coordinator and Sue a youth outreach worker.

Sheila Giesbrecht, Bethel Church, Winnipeg, is principal of Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

Irene and **Robert Jantzen**, Eigenheim Church, Rosthern, Sask., are beginning two-year MCC terms in Akron, Pa. Irene will be an inventory clerk and Robert a stock clerk for Ten Thousand Villages.

Carla Kidwell, Akron (Pa.) Church, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Akron as a mail processor.

Philip Landis, Corvallis (Ore.) Fellowship, has begun a two-year VS term with MBM as a project coordinator with Grower's Co-op in La Jara, Colo.

Shadell Permanand, Toronto United Mennonite Church, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Downsview, Ont., as a program support coordinator and volunteer coordinator at Conflict Mediation Services of Downsview.

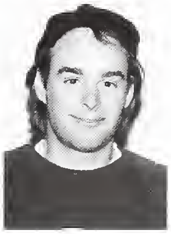
Carrie Purnhagen, First Church, Bluffton, Ohio, has begun a two-year VS term with MBM as director of the Afterschool Program for Boys and Girls Club and coordinator of Church Youth Together in La Jara, Colo.

Traycee Striemer, Zoar Church, Waldheim, Sask., is beginning a nine-month MCC term in Winnipeg as a resource manager and volunteer coordinator.

Lisa Wideman, Hawkesville (Ont.) Church, has begun a one-year VS term with MBM as a perceptual-motor therapist at the Board of Cooperative Services in La Jara, Colo.

Cheryl Zehr Walker is director of communications at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

Borntrager


Landis

Purnhagen

L. Wideman

Zehr Walker

Since its inception more than 50 years ago, Mennonite Mutual Aid has been considered a program board of the Mennonite Church, accountable directly to the MC General Board. At a meeting Dec. 6-7, 1996, in Chicago, the MMA board proposed that MMA continue as a program board of the integrated Mennonite Church/ General Conference Mennonite Church denomination. It was also recommended that composition of the 17-member MMA board be adjusted to reflect the participation levels of various denominations. The recommendation will be passed on to the MC General Board for further consideration as integration moves forward. In other business, Herbert Fransen was introduced to the board as MMA's new medical director, the first time MMA has had such a staff position. Dr. Fransen outlined his duties and suggested how he believes MMA will continue to be involved in a special niche of the evolving medical care system in the United States.

• • •

When Mark Simpson first came to Celebration Fellowship in Bolingbrook, Ill., in 1990, he discovered that a congregation that had used the building years before had sent incoming blacks away to form a separate congregation. Simpson began praying for a black pastor to join his ministry and found his prayer answered after participating in a pickup basketball game with Chuck Gallman, the African-American director of Christian education from a nearby Baptist church. Today Gallman serves as elder and Christian education and men's ministries leader at Celebration Fellowship, whose current membership is 30 to 35 percent nonwhite. Simpson continues to play outdoor basketball several times a week. Many of the youth he meets on the outdoor court have become part of the church's Sunday evening "basketball fellowship" and Simpson's personal "Ford Taurus ministry" as he shuttles players to and from games. (*Reconcilers*)

Eastern Mennonite University—Degree-completion program representative, Lancaster, Pa.: Bachelor's degree required. Experience in promotion, marketing, advertising, public relations and strategic planning essential. Must possess strong communication skills. Must be familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite faith.

Women and minorities are especially encouraged to apply. Send letter of application, resume, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to **John David Bowman, Director, 62 Crestmont Court, Lancaster, PA 17602; (717) 560-6464**.

Interim pastor: A small, vibrant, urban Anabaptist congregation committed to peace and evangelism seeks half-time pastor from Jan. 1, 1998, to Aug. 31, 1998, while current pastor is on sabbatical leave. Potential also for part-time service with Mennonite Central Committee office at the United Nations.

All inquiries to **Interim Pastoral Search Committee, Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003**.

Manager and guest host for **Menno House** in New York City. Half-time, live-in position for mature individual or couple to begin by June 1.

For information and application: **Menno House Board, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003-2889**; phone and fax **(212) 673-7970**; e-mail **nymcc@aol.com**.

Church administrative position: The Commission on Education of the General Conference Mennonite Church is seeking an **executive secretary/publisher** to begin full time by summer, 1997. This person will work out of the denominational office in Newton, Kan. Theological education and experience in Christian education and/or curriculum writing are highly desirable. Strategic planning and human resource management skills are essential. Experience with church publishing is helpful.

Send immediate confidential inquiries and/or resumes to **James Schrag, General Secretary, General Conference Mennonite Church, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.** Application screening will commence **Jan. 25** and will continue until the position is filled.

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Marlene Kropf, Mary Oyer,
June Alliman Yoder, AMBS
Spirituality, Pastoral Counseling and Healing
Marcus Smucker, AMBS
Ezekiel: An International Prophet Redefines History
Millard Lind, AMBS

June 16-27

Jesus the Teacher
Daniel Schipani, AMBS
Family Systems and Pastoral Care
Delores Friesen, guest instructor
Meets June 16 to July 3
History of Christian Spirituality
Peter Erb, guest instructor
Thessalonians: Caring for the Church
Jacob Elias, AMBS

Late June to early July

Conflict, Communication, Conciliation
John Paul Lederach, guest instructor
June 25 to July 3
Creation and Spiritual Renewal
Perry Yoder, Ph.D.
Includes canoe trip in boundary waters.
June 26-July 11
Congregational Administration: Models of Blessing and Empowering
Del Glick, guest instructor
June 30-July 3

August

Reading a Greek letter: I John
Mary Schertz, AMBS
Four credit hours
Meets August 4-29
Practices of Faith and Science
Juan Rogers and Moira Rogers,
guest instructors
Meets August 4 to August 15

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, Indiana 46517
219 295-3726
1 + 800 964-AMBS (2627)

Bluffton College announces a full-time **chief librarian** position beginning August 1997. Responsibilities include leadership and coordination of planning, budgeting, managing the collections and staffing the Musselman Library, including the Mennonite Historical Library and the college archives, as well as other collections on campus. The position involves directing ongoing efforts to advance and integrate the use of technology, representing library matters to administration, serving as liaison with library publics and interacting effectively with faculty and others in promoting the mission of the library. Graduate degree from an ALA-accredited program required; Ph.D. preferred. Administrative and supervisory experience in an academic setting expected. Position has all the rights and privileges of other faculty members except tenure.

Consideration of applications begins March 1 and continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at **http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.**

Submit letter of application, resume or vita, three letters of reference and unofficial transcripts to **Amy M. Tabler, Assistant to the V.P. and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.** EOE

Goshen College seeks applicants for a tenure-track position in **biology** beginning August 1997. Responsibilities include teaching entry-level biology for biology majors, a biology course for non-majors, a genetics course and other courses to be determined. A Ph.D. and teaching excellence are expected. Rank commensurate with experience. The department has modern labs in an excellent facility. Space is available for undergraduate research activities. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Applications from women and minority persons are strongly encouraged.

Send letter of application, resume, a list of research interests, a philosophy of teaching, unofficial transcripts and three professional references to **John D. Nyce, Interim Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503;** fax: **(219) 535-7660;** e-mail: **johndn@goshen.edu**; web site: **http://www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be accepted until **Jan. 31.**

Moving?

Let us know six weeks ahead of your move.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary has an opening for a **faculty position in Spiritual Formation and Worship.** This is a half-time appointment beginning Aug. 15, 1997, with a view to continuing employment. With a greater emphasis on spiritual formation, the position includes coordinating the spiritual formation program at AMBS, leading seminars for students in spiritual direction and teaching in the field. The worship portion of the position consists of team-teaching in worship and preaching and serving on the worship planning committee. Applicants for the position should have a Ph.D. or Doctor of Ministry degree in the field of spiritual formation, or be a candidate for such, with experience in spiritual direction and teaching. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer.

Please send a letter of application and resume to the **Dean's Office, AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517.**

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary has an opening for **Director of External Programs and Continuing Education.** This will be a full-time appointment beginning Sept. 1, 1997. The director of external programs will provide visionary leadership, administrative oversight and research development for the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church conference-based theological and pastoral education and distance learning programs that relate to AMBS. The continuing education director provides vision, scope and program development for events that serve pastors locally and churchwide as well as planning and coordinating continuing education events on campus. Applicants should have pastoral experience, a minimum of an M.Div. degree and preferably a Doctor of Ministry or Ph.D. degree, and vision and commitment to strong theological and pastoral leadership in the Mennonite church. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer.

Please send letter of application and resume to **President's Office, AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517.**

SEMINARY SAMPLER

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Reviews

BOOKS

PRESENCE AND POWER

With Our Own Eyes: The Dramatic Story of a Christian Response to the Wounds of War, Racism and Oppression *by Don Mosley with Joyce Hollyday (Herald Press, 1996, 300 pages, $12.95 U.S./$18.50 Cdn.)*

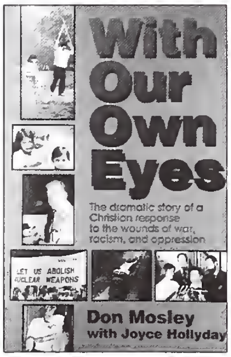
Reviewed by David Janzen, Evanston, Ill.

Jubilee Partners, a rural Christian intentional community, was launched in 1971 by three families in Georgia. Their vision was inspired by Clarence Jordan, and their name came from Jesus' promise of release for captives and good news to the poor. News of the Southeast Asian boat people focused their mission—to build a welcome center for victims of war around the world.

This small community, whose adult members only number in the teens, has offered Christian love, cultural orientation and language classes to more than 2,000 refugees from Asia, Cuba, Central America and Bosnia. Hundreds of volunteers and thousands of visitors have shared the community's life and extended its ministry.

Besides sustaining an ongoing refugee ministry, the community has launched creative, prophetic peacemaking missions to challenge the warmaking powers that cause refugees. Jubilee Partners members were active in Nicaragua at the beginnings of Witness for Peace, tracked and protested the White Train as it delivered nuclear warheads to the East Coast, organized the "Walk in Peace" campaign to provide artificial limbs to victims of contra landmines in Nicaragua and delivered thousands of letters to Baghdad from U.S. Christians asking for forgiveness for the bombing during Operation Desert Storm.

Don Mosley, a practical engineer and prophetic Christian, also turns out to be a riveting storyteller who enables others to see the exciting possibilities of the kingdom of God in our day. This book is sure to hold your attention as you read how a busload of refugees was delivered from the border patrol by a string of Texas tornadoes, how Mosley was led to connect through tears and prayer with the spokesperson for the contra guerrillas, how the judge called Mosley and Max Rice true Christians, then sentenced them to 40 days in jail for war tax resistance.


With Our Own Eyes
The dramatic story of a Christian response to the wounds of war, racism, and oppression
LET US ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Don Mosley
with Joyce Hollyday

The title echoes the opening words of 1 John, in which the writer bears witness to the presence of Jesus alive and powerful within the early church. At Jubilee Partners, we see that same presence and power in a community of radical Christians willing, again and again, to risk life and possessions to incarnate the teachings of Jesus regardless of the consequences.

RELIABLE WITNESSES

Children Are Images of Grace: A Pediatrician's Trilogy of Faith, Hope and Love *by Diane M. Komp, M.D. (Zondervan, 1996, 284 pages)*

Reviewed by Bonita L. Suter, Blue Mounds, Wis.

Komp describes herself as a "collector of stories." The stories that she recounts in this trilogy draw from her 25 years as a pediatric oncologist, yet each book stands alone in its messages to the reader. She uses "biblical hostesses" to link ancient stories to the experiences of children and challenges us to link our own stories with them as well.

In the first part, "A Window to Heaven," Komp says it would take a "reliable witness" for her to believe. These witnesses appear in the form of children with cancer. The mystery of their suffering has been one of the greatest stumbling blocks to faith for her, yet she asserts, "Children hold the key to unlocking life's greatest mysteries."

Komp tells of children as young as 3 months old who are struggling against cancer. She uses biblical characters, such as Abraham and Sarah, to describe the experiences of parents during the death journey of a child. At times her approach to death seems almost too lighthearted, as she speaks of the "anticipation of joy" that can be present at the bedside of a dying child.

The second part, "A Child Shall Lead Them," focuses on hope. The stories she recounts here are those of survival against all odds. We read

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHINA AND HONG KONG

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about Abraham offering his son to God, just as parents offer their children for painful medical treatments with faith in a positive result. Komp asks us to set aside all presumptions about sickness and death and instead involve ourselves in a journey of hope. Each chapter opens with an entry in a young patient's "Book of Hope," which includes the dreams that the author has for the child's future. She asserts that pain is much greater when we observe from a distance than when we involve ourselves with one who is hurting and thus open ourselves to the possibility of transformation.

In the final part, "Rebekah's Twins," Komp's journey of faith becomes clearer and we find ourselves looking deeper into the lives of families. Komp came to faith through the faithfulness of children, and in the preface to this trilogy she says, "what you hear from me through these several witnesses, entrust to faithful people, especially those who will be able to teach others as well."

LOOKING FOR GOD

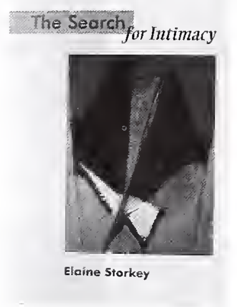
The Search for Intimacy *by Elaine Storkey (Eerdmans, 1996, 256 pages, $15 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Lynell Bergen, Arnaud, Man.

We live in a world that encourages and romanticizes a "Lone Ranger" attitude: I do not need anyone else, I will not risk being vulnerable to anyone else. The primacy of the individual over collective concerns has led to marriage breakdowns, violence and the absolute sanctity of "sound economic policy." We have lost both the apparent desire, and the skills, to become intimate with others.

Storkey, executive director of The Institute of Contemporary Christianity in London, England, addresses that loss. She defines intimacy "at its most basic ... [as] knowing that I am not alone in the universe." This knowledge shapes what we think, how we live and how we understand and respond to our world. Intimacy is what defines us as humans; it is part of our created being and part of what it means to be created in the image of God. "Ultimately, the search for intimacy is the search for God."

So what has gone wrong? Of course, the individualism that pervades our culture has certainly played a role in the breakdown of intimacy. Other social structures, such as patriarchy, and personal factors have also played a significant role. Gender differences and roles, and how these have become entrenched in our culture and in our theology, also contribute to our inability to communicate and trust one another.



Storkey also deals with sexuality and the challenges that have arisen to marriage and family life. Often, intimacy is defined as sexual activity, yet so much of the sexual activity in our society takes place under conditions that exclude any intimacy: rape, multiple sexual encounters, adultery and pornography all violate the spirit of intimacy. Storkey challenges the church to "help re-establish the wonderful humanness of sex."

While some chapters are more worthwhile than others, and the book is not always well-organized, *The Search for Intimacy* is well worth reading, as a personal challenge and a challenge to the church. Storkey's final chapter, in fact, focuses on the church as she discusses "Finding Intimacy."

Resources

● ● ▼

ON RACISM

Children

- **Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky** by Faith Ringgold
- **Down the Road** by Alice Shertle, illustrated by E.B. Lewis
- **Follow the Drinking Gourd** by Jeanette Winter
- **The Mixed-Up Chameleon** by Eric Carle
- **Nettie's Trip South** by Ann Turner, illustrated by Ronald Himler
- **Smoky Night** by Eve Bunting, illustrated by David Diaz
- **Tillie and the Wall** by Leo Lionni

Adults

- **Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons** by Jane Lazarre
- **The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou** by Maya Angelou
- **Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America** by Joseph Barndt
- **Dreaming God's Dream: Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** , Family Activities Guide by Kathleen McGinnis
- **Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege Toward Racial Reconciliation** by Jody Miller Shearer
- **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings** by Maya Angelou
- **Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1945-1963** by Taylor Branch
- **Skin Deep: Black Women and White Women Write About Race,** edited by Marita Golden and Susan Richards Shreve
- **Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?** by Martin Luther King Jr.
- **Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now** by Maya Angelou

Additional resources

- **America's Original Sin: A Study Guide on White Racism**, from the editors of *Sojourners*, Box 29272, Washington, DC 20017
- **Challenging Racism: Bible Studies for Junior High** by Jody Miller Shearer (Faith & Life Press, 1-800-743-2484)
- **Starting Out Right: Nurturing Young Children as Peacemakers** by Kathleen McGinnis and Barbara Oehlberg
- **Free Indeed**, a 25-minute video drama about racism from Mennonite Central Committee, (717) 859-1151
- **Forgive and Remember: Ted Risingsun's Story of Fort Robinson**. Risingsun, long-time Mennonite leader among Montana's Northern Cheyenne, tells of the experience of his grandmother and other Cheyenne, attacked by the U.S. Cavalry as they attempted to go back to Montana after their forced removal to Oklahoma Territory. The 22-minute video is available from the Commission on Home Ministries, (316) 283-5100.

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Editorial

Walk the Damascus Road

Racism is a disease we did not choose. But we can choose to fight it, to work to dismantle it in our society. Before we can do that, however, we must understand it. Then we must repent, turn around, change direction, just as the apostle Paul did on the Damascus Road (Acts 9).

I grew up believing I was superior to people of color simply because I was white. I grew up referring to African-Americans as "niggers." In high school, I and a classmate named Fred Bitler were known for telling racist jokes.

When I was 15, however, I made a decision to give my life to Jesus Christ. It took me some time to come to that decision because I knew, instinctively, that to believe in Christ meant I would have to change direction, to stop certain behaviors and act in a different manner. And after I made that decision, I stopped telling racist jokes or using the word nigger. I stopped associating with Fred Bitler.

Last spring I experienced another kind of Damascus Road. Nine Mennonite and Brethren in Christ institutions took part in eight days of anti-racism training called Damacus Road. I was part of the team of five from the General Conference Mennonite Church. We learned about the ways racism works as a system and we developed ways to dismantle racism in our institutions.

One step in such dismantling was to help GCMC staff and boards better understand the nature of racism in the United States today. Those of us involved made presentations to our boards and to staff. At the GCMC's central offices we gave four presentations.

These presentations sought to show that racism is a systemic evil. We used this definition of racism: "racial prejudice plus power." Racial prejudice is often personal and occurs among people of color as well as whites. But it becomes racism when wedded with power that reinforces that prejudice.

In the United States, racial prejudice is reinforced and institutionalized in our various systems: the economy, education, government, religion, military, media, business and industry, health, criminal justice, transportation. In order to dismantle racism, we must help transform these systems.

These systems include many institutions, including our own. Institutions act in the name of their constituencies, their members. I can change my personal behavior toward people of color, but that does not change the systems that oppress people of color every day.

Through this training my eyes were opened to how I experience many privileges simply because I am white. Peggy McIntosh lists 26 such privileges. Here are a few:

- I can arrange to be in the company of my race most of the time.
- I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- I can turn on the television or open the newspaper and see people of my race widely represented.
- I can be sure my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
- I can swear or dress in secondhand clothes or not answer letters without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals or the poverty or illiteracy of my race.

To support systems that hold up one kind of people above another is against God's desire.

I heard from people of color who cannot imagine a day going by that they do not have to think about racism. I hardly ever have to.

Racism affects everyone. I did not ask for these privileges. I had no choice about the color of my skin. I'm not trying to make anyone feel guilty. That's useless. I want us to help dismantle racism for the benefit of all, ourselves included.

Such a task seems formidable. But it is our calling as Christians. Just as Paul's Damascus Road experience led him to work toward eliminating the barriers between Jews and Gentiles, we, too, are called to believe and proclaim that Christ "has broken down the dividing wall" (Ephesians 2:14).

God created humanity in God's image (Genesis 1:27). To support systems that hold up one kind of people above another is against God's desire. Let us walk that Damascus Road that leads us to stand against the sin of racism.

Gordon Houser

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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living the vision

VISION: HEALING & HOPE

Prologue

At Wichita '95 the delegates of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church unanimously passed a Vision: Healing and Hope statement (see the summary on page 3). As Anabaptists, however, we should not be satisfied simply to agree on a statement. We want to live out what it calls us to.

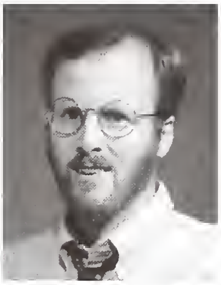
In this issue we offer excerpts of a book newly published by Faith & Life Press, *Living the Vision: Spirituality and Stewardship* by Eleanor Snyder and Ken Hawkley. The authors use biblical background and theological reflection to lead into ways of responding to the vision. The emphasis of the book is to live out what we believe. For example, we are not only to learn about prayer, we are to pray.

Terry Conway profiles businessman J.S. Herr (page 10), who has built a successful business while adhering to his Christian values.

Ellen Kroeker's poem (page 11) fits well with this time of midwinter when snow blankets much of the North American continent.

In his Fiscal Health column, J.B. Miller addresses a problem that has been in the news lately: companies that use sweatshop labor, not only overseas but in the United States as well (page 12).

The news report of the Peacemaker Congress (page 13) is a good introduction to Christian Peacemaker Teams, which will be featured in our next issue. *gh*



Next issue: Christian Peacemaker Teams

Cover: Design by John Hiebert

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General Conference Mennonite Church

God invites us to an ever-deepening relationship through the spiritual discipline of prayer. Prayer is paying attention to the presence of God within us.

living the vision: prayer

Ken Hawkley and
Eleanor Snyder

> **"God calls us into relationship but does not demand instant intimacy. As in human relationships, love grows slowly as trust develops. God waits while we deal with our fears and our doubts and our curiosity. God waits while we test our assumptions. God loves us while we take all the time we need to return that love. We must examine our assumptions and attitudes, for they, not God, determine our response to God" (Jane E. Vennard, *Praying for Friends and Enemies: Intercessory Prayer*, Augsburg Fortress, 1995).**

biblical background

Jeremiah 29:11-14a, 31:31-34

Jeremiah was a prophet called by God to proclaim the message of God's redemption and hope in the midst of social and political upheaval. The setting for this text is the mid-590s B.C.E. Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem while many of the people of Judah were sent into exile in Babylon 700 miles away. This text is part of a letter written to these exiles.

Prominent themes of Jeremiah deal with God's judgment on Judah for its sin. "The people bowed down before Baal and not the Lord: leaders as well as people spoke falsely; the rich exploited or ignored the poor; violence was the hallmark of society; military alliances were forged with Egypt; rulers lavished money upon themselves and prophets could not be trusted. In all of this God was taken for granted, or worse, was marginal in the people's thinking" (Elmer A. Martens, *Jeremiah, Believers' Church Bible Commentary*, Herald Press, 1986).

God was not, however, willing to give up on the people of Judah despite their sin. God constantly calls the people to return to God, to renew their covenant with God, to pursue God with a yearning desire to know God, the One who says over and over again, "You shall be my people, and I will be your God" (30:22). "This pithy expression proclaims that God takes initiative. … It suggests that the people of God are a peculiar, set-apart people.

VISION:
HEALING
& HOPE

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

The materials on pages 3-7 are reprinted from Living the Vision: Spirituality & Stewardship *by Eleanor Snyder and Ken Hawkley (Faith & Life Press, 1996), first of a three-part study series to help individuals and congregations live out the Vision: Healing and Hope statement adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church. To order* Living the Vision *call 1-800-743-2484. Eleanor Snyder, Kitchener, Ont., is director of children's education for the Commission on Education. Ken Hawkley, Powell, Ohio, is director of adult/young adult education for the Commission on Education.*

Its overtones are those of intimacy, privilege and accountability. It contains both promise and demand" (Martens).

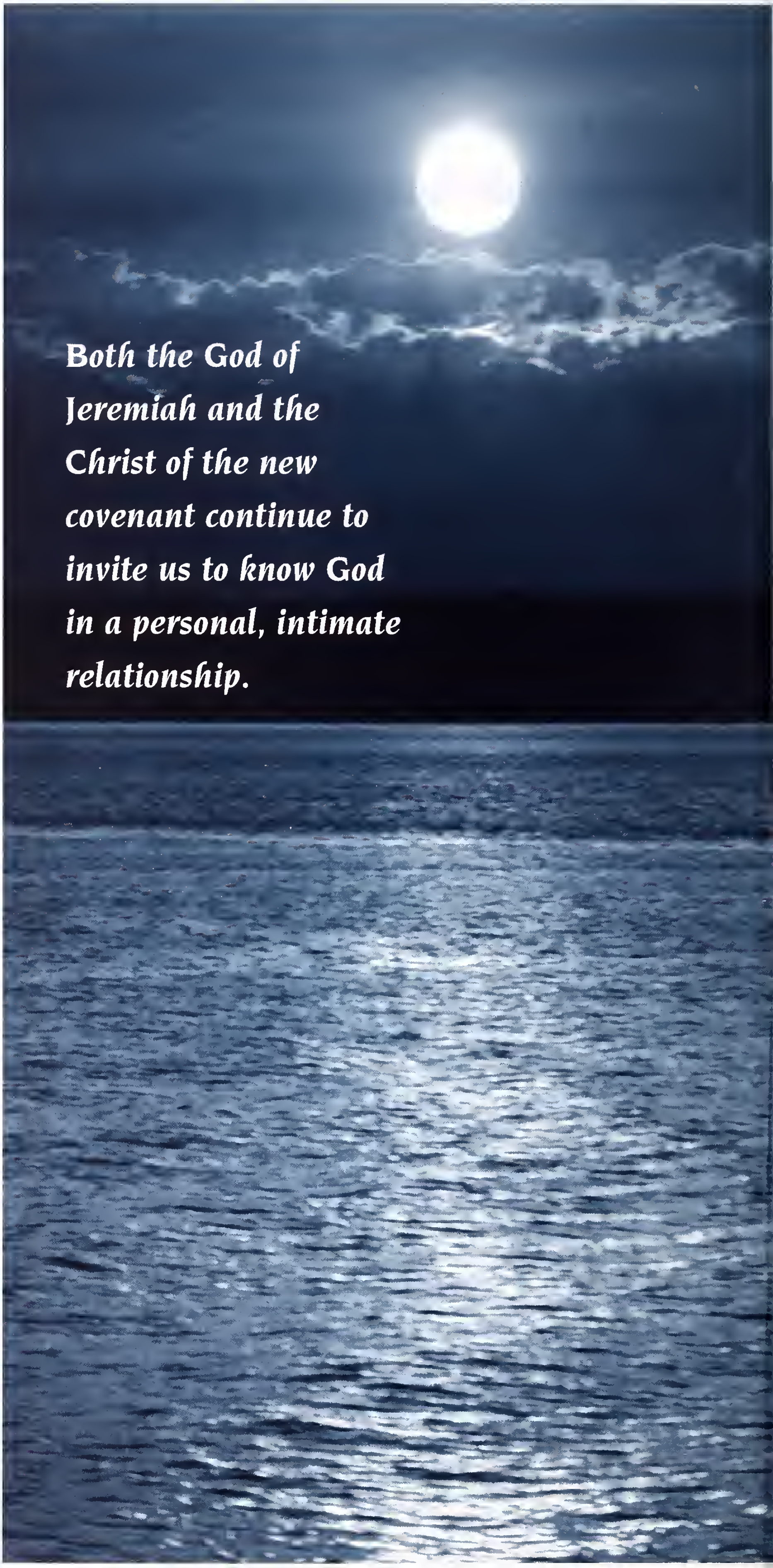
According to Martens, the Jeremiah 29:10-14 text is a salvation oracle. Here God takes the initiative to come to God's people. The verb "visit" (verse 10) means "to pay attention." God offers hope to the people who are despairing: God promises a return to better circumstances, part of God's plan for the good of the people. The welfare of the people literally means "shalom." "Shalom embraces all that belongs to the good and satisfying life. It means 'peace,' understood as 'well-being, wholeness, unimpaired relationships and harmony.' It is the opposite to fragmentation, conflict and alienation. The discomfort of the long exile is intended to issue in good, namely a close relationship with God. The human basis for the restoration is a new heart that seeks after God (cf. 31:33). God is immediately available to the seeker. Physical restoration of the land is connected with spiritual restoration to God" (Martens).

This text, then, offers a tiny bit of hope to the people who have been devastated and filled with despair. God's promise is that God will honor those who honestly search for a meaningful, intimate relationship with the Holy One.

The law of God: This promise of hope is reiterated in Jeremiah 31:31-34 with God's invitation of a new covenant that is written on the people's hearts—i.e., is within them and not external. Under this new covenant, God promises an intimate relationship in which the people will know God from personal experience, not from what others say about God. The law of God will be internalized in the hearts of the people, the experience of God will be "direct and unmediated," and the cornerstone of the covenantal relationship will be forgiveness (Martens).

This promise is not only for the exiled people of Judah. It holds true for us today. Christians believe that the new covenant promised has been fulfilled in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, who invited people to follow him, to accept his forgiveness of sins and to live abundantly in God's new reign as agents of hope and reconciliation.

Both the God of Jeremiah and the Christ of the new covenant continue to invite us to know God in a personal, intimate relationship. Through prayer we are invited to search for God, to seek for this intimacy by attending to our hearts. And God will validate our search by revealing Godself to us.



Both the God of Jeremiah and the Christ of the new covenant continue to invite us to know God in a personal, intimate relationship.

prayer: attending to god

A theological reflection

There are many avenues to meaningful prayer. Prayer is shaped by our needs, our understanding of what prayer is, our understanding of who God is and our relationship to God. In addition, each one of us is uniquely gifted and precious to God. The transformation of one's self into Christlikeness happens in different ways because we are all differently gifted.

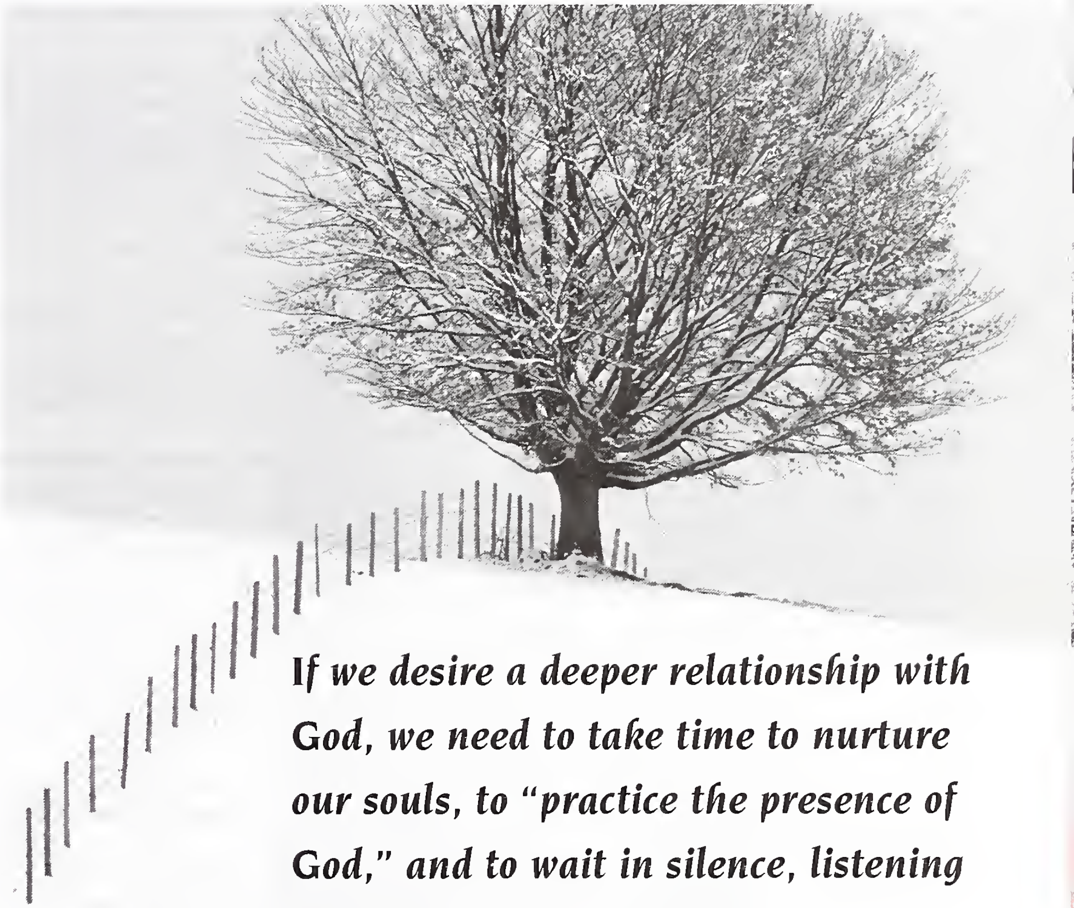
God has honored the uniqueness of each us by calling us to follow in a multitude of ways and by inviting us to "mind that call" in diverse ways. Our personalities often dictate how we pray. The introverted personality, for example, receives energy from quiet within, while the extroverted is energized by outside sources.

It seems, however, that if we desire a deeper relationship with God, we need to take time to nurture our souls, to "practice the presence of God," and to wait in silence, listening for God's still, small voice.

In *Praying with the Anabaptists*, the authors write, "What many people are recognizing is that listening modes of prayer have been neglected. We are good at making requests of God but not so good at hearing God speak to us. Twentieth-century Christians have become so infected by the busy, productive spirit of our age that we have almost abandoned prayer in our pursuit of accomplishment. Not accomplishment but relationship is at the heart of prayer—an intimate, trusting relationship between the Creator and the children of earth (Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall, *Praying with the Anabaptists*, Faith & Life Press, 1994).

It is not easy to maintain a discipline of solitude, that is, setting aside a regular time and place to be with God, to "waste time with God." Our busy lifestyles tell us we do not have even 20 minutes a day to spend with the One who dwells within us. Sometimes we try to pray but give up because we do not "feel" like we were heard, or God has not answered our prayers as expected.

In the Jeremiah text (see "Biblical Background") we have the promise of God's faithfulness to those who genuinely seek a relationship with God. This invitation to seek God is given to individuals as well as the community. Faithfulness belongs both in the person and the people of God. Alone, we seek God's presence in our lives so we know how to respond uniquely to the gentle voice of God. Together as a community, we pay attention to the Lord who calls us to listen. Henri Nouwen writes that in our listening together to God's word "a true creative silence can grow. This silence is a silence filled with the caring presence of God. ... The discipline of community always points us beyond the boundaries of race, sex, nationality, character or age, and always reveals to us who we are before God and for each other" (Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Making All Things New: An Invitation to Spiritual Life*, Harper & Row, 1981).



If we desire a deeper relationship with God, we need to take time to nurture our souls, to "practice the presence of God," and to wait in silence, listening for God's still, small voice.

what is prayer?

Ways to respond

Name the word or phrase you would use to define what prayer is. List these words on the board without comment under the heading, "What Do We Know About Prayer?"

Take a few minutes to think about a time when prayer was especially meaningful for you. What was the occasion? What made it memorable? What was the setting? Were you alone? in a group? in a retreat setting? at church? at home?

Find a partner or form a triad to tell about your experience of prayer. Pass if you choose not to share.

In the larger group, comment briefly, if you choose, on your observations about how prayer is defined. Write these observations on the chart or board under the heading "I Pray Best When … " Are there general observations to make about prayer?

Read or listen to Jeremiah 29:11-14a (stop after the second "says the Lord"). Be aware of a word, phrase, symbol or image that stands out for you. Pause for a minute or two to reflect on the text. Share the word, phrase, symbol or image that came to mind.

Read or listen to the text again. Sit in silence for two minutes with these questions:

- What feelings does this passage generate within you?
- What does this text say about God's desire for relationship?
- What does this text tell us about prayer?

Pray! It is one thing to talk about prayer. It is another to actually pray. Take five to 10 minutes to sit in silence, recognizing God's presence around you. Outlined below is a style of prayer that invites participants to listen to God. Some people refer to this type of prayer as centering prayer. *(Note: A facilitator is necessary to guide the process. Explain the process carefully before you begin so that everyone knows what to expect.)*

Sing, "There is a place of quiet rest" (*Hymnal: A Worship Book*, #5) or the chorus, "Be still and know." If you would rather not sing, repeat Psalm 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God."

Let your body relax. Sit with feet flat on the floor, back straight, hands loosely folded on your lap, eyes closed. Let your mind rest. Center your heart on God. Do not be anxious.

It is one thing to talk about prayer. It is another to actually pray.

Repeat to yourself the phrase from the Psalm, another simple phrase from the Bible, a hymn, or a word such as love, joy, grace. Say the word as you concentrate on breathing in and breathing out.

If you become distracted by your thoughts, acknowledge them and set them aside in your mind. Some people imagine tying a balloon to each thought and letting it float Godward.

At the end of the prayer time, which the leader will indicate with a word, slowly open your eyes.

When all eyes are open, pray the Lord's Prayer together, or have the leader pray.

Gather back in your original small groups to share your experience of this type of prayer. Again, there should be no pressure to speak.

During the week:

1. Take some time each day to listen to God in a quiet place free of distractions. Use the centering prayer to guide you. Do not give up. Write your reflections in a journal or notebook.
2. Ask God for a heightened sense of awareness for God's presence during your daily routines.
3. If you feel comfortable, find a spiritual partner to talk with about your prayer life.
4. Begin each day with a Scripture text. Let the text be with you all day. Think about its meaning for your life. What does it tell you about your relationship with God? At the end of the day, take time to write or reflect on what God has revealed to you.

Monday: Read Psalm 46:10.

Tuesday: Read 1 Kings 19:1-13. Elijah met God in the sound of "sheer silence" (vv. 12-13).

Wednesday: Read Psalm 42.

Thursday: Read Matthew 6:5-6.

Friday: Read John 15:1-11.

Saturday: Read Romans 8:26-27.

Let us celebrate what we have learned and find ways to use that new knowledge to become more faithful in our Christian walk.

living the vision: celebration

VISION:
HEALING
& HOPE

"We seem ... to be suspended in what the anthropologists call a liminal time, a time between the fading of the old stories to live by and the emergence of new ones. A character in [*Couples*,] one of John Updike's novels, refers to it as 'one of those dark ages that visits mankind (sic), between millennia, between the death and rebirth of gods, when there is nothing to steer by but sex and stoicism and the stars.' Surely we can do better than that. Our believing communities must work to fashion stories we can share and live by" (Robert Detweiler in *Trackless Wastes and Stars to Steer By* by Michael King, Herald Press, 1990).

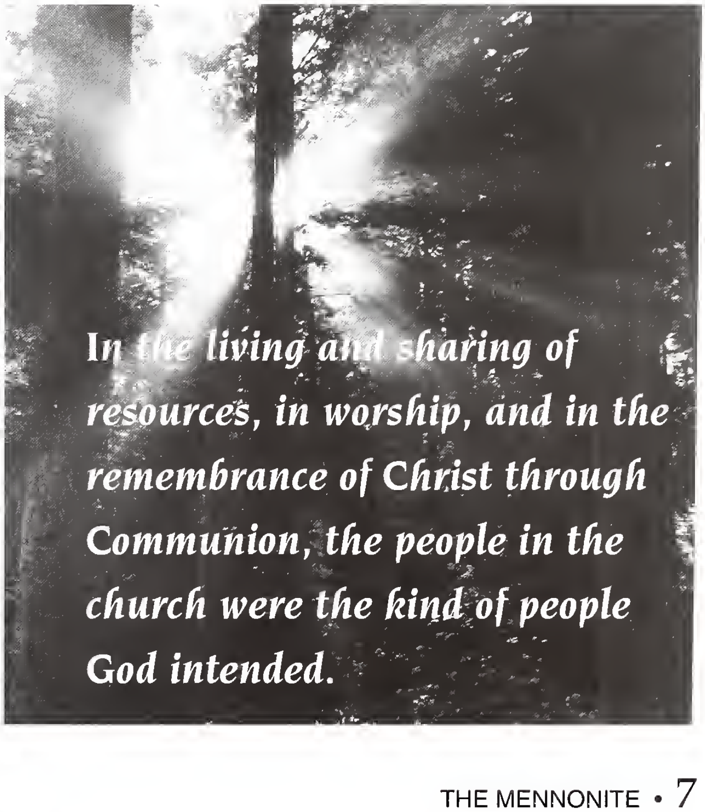
biblical background

Micah 6:6-8; Acts 2:42-47

These verses from Micah are a call to be right with God and to do what is right. God expects both. Like Amos, who lived slightly earlier, Micah felt that shallow religious worship was anathema to God (6:6-8). God also wants injustice to end (Micah 3, for example).

Micah's statement came in the context of a salvation oracle for Jerusalem, which was apparently under siege at that time (5:1). Micah told the people that God would save them and strip them of all the things that alienated them from God. Then Micah set up a mock trial (6:1) in which God acted as the plaintiff against Israel. The three-part statement (6:8) is, in effect, a verdict based on the obligations the people have in their covenant with God.

Consider Acts 2:42-47 as one suggestion God has given for how to live out Micah's words. In the living and sharing of resources, in worship, and in the remembrance of Christ through Communion, the people in the church were the kind of people God intended. It had been seven weeks since Christ had risen. And when the Holy Spirit finally came upon them, Peter was inspired to give a testimony, and thousands were convinced. In the apparent euphoria of this early evangelism, we encounter this example of people trying to live out what God required of them.



In the living and sharing of resources, in worship, and in the remembrance of Christ through Communion, the people in the church were the kind of people God intended.

agents of healing

A theological reflection

Sometimes readings in one testament give new understanding to something in the other. Scripture enlightens Scripture. The link between the two texts is not intentional in the same way the messianic prophecies are linked together. The connection is serendipitous.

Micah and others described what God wanted or did not want from the chosen people, Israel. Luke gave an example of what God meant. It is as if God provided a "for instance."

However, it is only a "for instance." It is not meant to be duplicated, rather to inspire. God not only wants us to know what is required of us but also that those requirements are attainable. God knows that telling us what to do is vastly different from having us actually do it. We learn better by doing.

Micah might say that if we only study God's Word we will have wasted our time. We must experience God's Word and let it change us, or else we cannot be called Christian. We are judged—both by the world and by God—in what we do, not what we say.

We hope that this study material has encouraged further study of God's Word—it is a pearl of great price. But more, we hope that everyone will be challenged to take God's Word seriously enough to be agents of healing and hope in a world crying for just that.

God not only wants us to know what is required of us but also that those requirements are attainable.

how to be a 'for instance'

Ways to respond

In groups of three or four, brainstorm ways that your congregation—like the church in Acts 2—can be a "for instance" of God's vision. What are specific ways that your congregation can intentionally "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God"? Jot down ideas, one per strip of colored paper. Write ideas that connect with worship and spirituality on one color. Write stewardship ideas on the other.

After about 10 minutes, post the paper in two places by color. Observe, organize and prioritize these ideas. Take time to reflect on what is written. Is there a consensus on what "acts" you can do to live out God's vision? Is there a small group that can flesh out the ideas and make plans on your behalf? Micah's call was to act, not just think or plan.

To live the vision means to be prophetic, to be wary of the predominant culture, and to seek to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ when it goes against the ways of society. The church needs more Micahs to proclaim the vision and more faith communities to live out the vision in a visible, active, creative way.

When we take seriously our call to faithfulness, it means a commitment to a deeper relationship with the One who calls us by name. This relationship grows as we love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength and offer all we have to God. As we tend to our spiritual selves, we will be open to being God's agents of healing and hope in our families, in our church, in our community and in the world.

As a commitment to this hope and your intent to take seriously God's invitation to follow as a faithful disciple, offer something tangible or verbal to God as witnessed by the group. Go around the circle, "giving" something to God to symbolize your commitment. It may be a watch to represent time in prayer, a credit card for tithing, the Bible for reading, a candle for meditation. You do not have to have the object, but take a few minutes to think about an object or to get one. If you do have an object, place it on the worship table as your "offering."

Close in silent prayer or offer sentence prayers.

During the week:

During your devotional time this week, spend time reflecting on the Scripture texts below. Review the texts in light of the "bigger picture" of spirituality and stewardship. As you contemplate discipleship in the present moment, write down one thing each day that you want to act on. Then do it.

Monday: John 1:35-42, Isaiah 43:1-4
Tuesday: Jeremiah 29:11-14a, 31:31-34
Wednesday: Revelation 4:1-11, Psalm 95:1-7, Amos 5:21-24
Thursday: Psalm 19:7-14
Friday: Psalm 51:6-17
Saturday: Psalm 42
Sunday: Colossians 1:11-12

Letters

MEMBERS IN THE MILITARY

I am so grateful for the firm stance that Jerry Stanaway (Letters, Dec. 10, 1996, issue, page 10) is able to take on not accepting as congregational members those who are in the military.

What worries me, however, is that neither Jesus (in the story of the centurion) nor Peter (in the stories of Cornelius and of the Philippian jailer) were able to draw quite the same neat distinctions about acceptance.

But I guess we should be grateful that we have been able to gain new insights, moving beyond those earlier overly generous inclusions. *Vern Ratzlaff, Saskatoon*

For several years I've considered the question of members of the military being members of the Mennonite church. I've also closely followed the discussion regarding church membership and ministry by people who are homosexuals.

I believe we should welcome with gratitude to God all those who are led by the Spirit to our midst—and then trust that the Spirit will work to transform each of us in whatever way God has planned for us.

None of us is a perfectly finished product of God's loving-kindness. How can we judge what transformation God has in store for us or for others?

How much better to welcome in loving-kindness all who are attracted to our community—requiring only that each of us pledges to study and grow in the Spirit-filled light God shines on the path for each of us who commits to follow Jesus.

All my adult life I have struggled to overcome anger and to keep from creating conflict around me. I'm not a finished product of God's grace, yet. I wouldn't want to be declared unfit for membership in the church community because of this deficiency. And is there one who judges herself or himself spiritually transformed enough to cast the first stone? *Charity B. Gourley, Galveston, Texas*

WHAT IS SUPPORTIVE?

Words and names that we give to ourselves and others often carry definite messages. The news article in the Aug. 13, 1996, issue ("Conference Models an Inclusive Church," page 13) reported on the conference "Dancing at the Table" sponsored by the "Supportive Congregations Network." The conference was reported to be supportive of people who are gay, lesbian and bisexual. Supportive in what way? If I disagree with what the Supportive Congregations Network says regarding certain sexual practices, does that make me nonsupportive of people who are homosexual or bisexual in orientation? The article's bias leaves the impression that to disagree is to be nonsupportive.

I believe that one way for me to be supportive of all my brothers and sisters in the area of sexuality is to call us to a holy life. I believe that this call to holy living is what the delegate body in Saskatoon was seeking to promote in the position it took. So if being supportive means I must give approval for sexual union outside of the marriage of one woman to one man, then I guess I am not. If, however, being supportive means walking together with my sisters and brothers so we can encourage each other to grow more and more in holiness in all areas of our lives, including our sexuality, then count me in. *Craig Maven, Berne, Ind.*

'SHEER FOLLY'

I appreciated the intent of Darrell Fast's article, "The Christ of Faith in the Jesus of History" (Dec. 10, 1996, issue, page 10). The quest for the historical Jesus is important. However, I was startled to discover that in his eyes many of us practice "sheer folly" in believing the fishing stories of Luke 5 and John 21 to be separate events. In that "folly" we're at least in good company. From Augustine and Calvin, to F.F. Bruce and Tasker, most Bible commentators have accepted such a view.

Since Fast notes that the Christ of faith is the area "where sincere Christians may begin to disagree with each other," I thought I would.

It's an odd gambit, to make a case for seeking Jesus' historicity through the denial of a text's historical context. This becomes more unusual when the parallel passages used to make the case are as notable for their differences as their similarities. To say the Luke 5 and John 21 stories are the same events may, in truth, require "greater faith" than believing they are separate occurrences.

Small witticisms aside, Fast provides no reason to cut Jesus historically loose from two texts that tell his story. Where is the problem? If we admit to one miracle, can't we admit to two? Or can't Jesus do the same miracle twice? Are we so nervous with Jesus' signs that when confronted with two of the same type we must run for textual cover?

Doesn't it make more sense to consider the paralleling of previous experience, the "trigger" that fires Peter, half-naked, into the water and swimming for shore? Even a cursory reading of the text would show Peter's response is swift and emotional. It's not that Peter didn't remember the past events, but that he did. Peter's certainty, that the person speaking to them is the same man they saw die, is validated by his previous experience with Jesus. The eye of faith sees most clearly when the lenses of both historical quest and personal experience are congruent. Unfortunately, Fast's rendering of the "fish story" scratched the lenses while valiantly trying to clean the glass. *Chris Arney, Clearbrook, B.C.*

Why does Darrell Fast state that it is "sheer folly" to claim that Luke 5:1ff and John 21:1ff are separate incidents? On the face of it, they do relate two separate incidents: They differ in setting, circumstances, details and effect on Peter. For 1,900 years Bible readers read them as two separate accounts; Augustine in the fifth century points out seven striking differences between the incidents. And is it really surprising that Jesus more than once would have to choose precisely a fishing scene to deeply touch a willful man whose vocation was fishing?

Furthermore, if the Gospel writers can be no more accurate than that when they recount a multiple-witness event, if they can garble and mutilate an incident like this, then, as eyewitnesses to actual events, they are incompetents. I more than suspect that the incompetency lies rather with the scholarship of the so-called Jesus Seminar. *Monty Ledford, Aberdeen, Idaho*

Profile

Learn from life's lessons

J.S. Herr has followed his Christian values in building a successful business.

Terry Conway

Terry Conway

Good working relationship: *J.S. Herr in the potato fields*

For half a century J.S. Herr has authored the story. It is a homespun narrative brimming with trial and error, with natural evils and common mishaps, with personal suffering and glorious triumph. It's the proverbial "rags-to-riches" saga, but having embarked on the riches phase sometime back, Herr is content to talk about signposts along the road that have brought Herr Foods in Nottingham, Pa., to its golden anniversary.

Herr, the chair and CEO, is credited with setting the standard of excellence in a company with sales in excess of $130 million that ranks ninth in sales among 130 U.S. snack food companies. He has a simple formula for success: Learn from life's lessons.

Back in the spring of 1952, there was a potato shortage due to heavy rains, and prices tripled the going rate. Herr and his competitor, Si Mauser of Charles Chips, agreed to purchase potatoes grown in North Carolina for both their businesses.

Borrowing a tractor-trailer, Herr bought 375 bags at $7 per bag. But when he returned home the price of potatoes in southeastern Pennsylvania had dropped to $5 a bag.

"We didn't have any written contract, but Si Mauser was a man who stuck by his word," says Herr, who's affectionately known as J.S. to almost everyone. "So that taught me a good lesson in [acting in] good faith."

Later that summer, Herr remembers being on the other side of the table. "I agreed to purchase 5,000 bags (for $10,000) from a Lancaster farmer. After I left his place it rained for two weeks; with no sun the potatoes began to jelly rot. Now remember I just learned this lesson a couple of months before that. I told him that I'd take them, so we dug them and took them. I put them in storage, and then after a month we had to dump them all back into the fields.

"I went back to Morris Nissley [the farmer] and told him that I had planned to pay him back as I sold the product, so I said I'd pay him $1,000 the first year and pay off the rest with 5 percent interest. About a week later a fellow showed up on our property and asked if he could buy some of the trees. I didn't even realize I had something of value so he went down and measured the trees and came back and wrote me a check for $1,400, which I gave to Mr. Nissley. Shortly thereafter someone asked if they could purchase a building lot. Within a couple of months I was able to sell enough lots to pay Mr. Nissley off completely.

"So I just take it that the Lord's hand was in it, in that if I kept my promise he'd be faithful to me. It was a test unbeknownst to me."

Integrity and a family philosophy of commitment to his community, employees and customers have served him well. Once the supplier for the Philadelphia region only, Herr Foods now distributes its products in nine states in the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic region, operating over 400 sales routes and 22 warehouse facilities from its Chester County headquarters.

Even after five decades, Herr remains near at hand. The family's brick home sits roughly 50 yards from the Nottingham production facility. His son J.M. Herr has taken over the running of the company, and two younger brothers are involved in expanding the business.

"I don't make the day-to-day decisions any more," says Herr, 72, from his second-floor office. "I've turned it over to my sons, but I get involved with the executive committee on major projects."

These days Herr's time is taken up with the National Federation of Independent Businesses, charitable projects, spiritual concerns and promoting his namesake product.

Born in August 1924, James Stauffer Herr worked alongside his four brothers and sister on his father's Willow Street Farm in Lancaster County. As a teenager he tended the poultry business and was solely responsible for looking after 2,000 laying hens.

Entrepreneurial heart: A natural-born people lover, Herr realized his conversations were fairly limited on the farm, so he got his father's blessing to leave and followed his entrepreneurial heart. In the spring of 1946 he discovered that Verna's Potato Chips of Lancaster was for sale at $1,750. Through his farm labor he saved $250, which was matched by his father, and he borrowed the rest at 4 percent interest.

Burning with energy, if not direction,

he peeled and cooked potatoes in the morning, packed them into five-pound cans and five-cent bags and then sold them door to door throughout Lancaster in the afternoon. At night he and his girlfriend (now his wife of 49 years) packaged more chips and loaded them into a truck for a distributor in Hanover, Pa. In September 1946, he proposed to Mim after an annual farm show in West Lampeter, Pa., and five months later they were married in her family's home in Paradise, Pa.

Integrity and a family philosophy of commitment to his community, employees and customers have served him well.

In June 1949, they celebrated the birth of their first child, Miriam June. Somehow, they also found time to help teach at Oxford's Mount Vernon Mennonite Church.

Herr relocated twice to larger facilities. In 1951, his factory was destroyed by fire. The insurance check for $4,000 only covered the cost of replacing the equipment. The company kept in business by purchasing chips from their competitors and repackaging them in Herr's bags in his father's garage. In the meantime Herr looked for an alternative site on which to build another facility.

The Herrs bought a 37-acre farm with a house and barn in the small community of Nottingham. The property was expensive ($18,000), but the Herrs viewed it as a perfect location—close to their mission church and their distribution area.

"We believed the Lord would lead us to the right spot, so we prayed and felt this land was the answer to our prayers," says Herr. "It's good we didn't buy the other we looked at (13 acres in Oxford), because we never realized how much the business would grow."

By the end of their first decade in business, the company had surmounted financial and natural disasters. In 1958, after much deliberation, the Herrs decided to add seasonings to their chips, beginning with barbecue. Over the years the company has introduced a number of flavors, including Sour Cream and Onion, No-Salt, Old Bay, Salt and Vinegar, Pizza, Red Hot, Slightly Salted, Pennsylvania Dutch, Dill, and Sour Cream and Cheddar.

In the mid-1970s, Herr added a number of other snack foods, including cheese curls, popcorn, pretzels, and corn and tortilla chips. In 1983, to reflect the expanding line, Herr's Potato Chips changed its name to Herr Foods, Inc.

Although potato chips account for 55 percent of sales, tortilla chips and pretzels are the fastest-growing items. The company also enjoys international sales in the United Kingdom and Latin America. Herr's growth has been rolling along at an 8 to 10 percent clip in recent years due to the introduction of new products and new markets.

A former Chester County school board president for five years, Herr is on the board of Lancaster (Pa.) Bible College and is an elder at Mount Vernon Mennonite Church.

Despite some early reservations, Herr Foods agreed to establish a corporate chaplaincy at 22 plants and distribution centers to aid employees with personal crises, offering marriage counseling, grief management and help with family problems.

"Our job is to offer employees and their families, regardless of denomination, assistance in their jobs or personal lives should they need it," says Mark Pullian, Herr's corporate chaplain. The program is strictly voluntary and is nonintrusive.

Besides his role as company chair, Herr crisscrosses the country speaking at seminars for the National Federation of Independent Business. He has been the elected chair since 1989.

"It doesn't matter how small you start if there is continued growth. It's our good working relationship that makes the company work well. I believe if you have a positive attitude and trust in the Lord during the tough times, you can succeed. Our family has five kids and 20 grandchildren, but I also feel we have an extended family of 1,100 employees. I've been blessed with good people, people who really care, and that's a success story for each of them."

Terry Conway lives in Wilmington, Del. His stories have appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer *and the* Baltimore Sun Magazine, *and other national and regional magazines.*

Kansas February

Ellen Kroeker

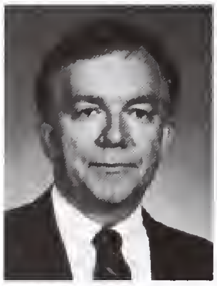
Still a long wait until Pentecost.
Late winter days swing
their closings, the sky's light
welcome and unaccustomed
at the supper table.
The evening's turbulence,
(now clear and low sun, now
tumbling maroon clouds),
has the raw naivete of a yet new
year, not having learned
the customs and graces
of our ways. The northern
wind has the wrong touch—too
cold, too pushing—for
the companionable offering
of sunset. We reach toward comfort,
a ritual with wine, the kitchen warm
with the scene of risen bread,
trying to counter the insistence
of an unknown, unreasoning wind.

Ellen Kroeker lives in Lawrence, Kan.

Living in a global economy

How to promote justice in the companies we purchase products from

J.B. Miller



J.B. Miller is vice president for financial services for Mennonite Mutual Aid and manager of Mennonite Foundation.

Whenever I buy something I like to check where it was made. It probably started when I assumed quality was based on where things were made. With news recently about the working conditions of many people around the world, it is a good practice to continue checking labels.

While the issues of child labor and unsatisfactory working conditions have been on the minds of some people for awhile, the focus recently intensified when it was learned plants in New York and Central America that manufactured clothing under the name of Kathie Lee Gifford, a TV personality, were operating under clearly unacceptable conditions. Problems were uncovered in the United States as well.

One garment worker in New York described working 56-hour weeks at $3.75 per hour with no overtime pay. Anyone who complains is fired and replaced with another worker. Many of these people speak little or no English and are not informed of their rights as employees.

Examples of similar inequities abound on the international front. Preteens in Pakistan, working for 6 cents an hour, stitch soccer balls that we purchase at more than $10. Indonesian workers need over a month's pay to purchase a pair of the athletic shoes they manufacture. And one of North America's most popular Christmas gifts, Barbie dolls, are made in China by workers who allegedly earn less than $1.99 per day, the minimum wage in China.

Many of us are troubled by these working conditions. But in a world where the economy is global, it is probably impossible for consumers to avoid products manufactured and marketed under less than ideal working conditions. And while it is not realistic to expect North American working conditions to be the norm for the rest of the world, sensitivity to these issues is important for Christians. Few people suggest North American companies shut down their foreign factories. Instead, religious and consumer groups are pushing to improve the working conditions of employees at the lowest end of the manufacturing chain.

Soccer balls: Because of these pressures, changes are already beginning. Reebok, which purchases over 350,000 soccer balls manufactured in Pakistan, has announced it is changing its operations. Rather than cutting the panels of soccer balls in a factory and then sending them out to villages to be sewn together, often by children, Reebok will require that all work be done in a factory where they are able to maintain better control over the work force and the working conditions.

Last summer President Clinton announced the establishment of an Apparel Industry Partnership to "develop industry options for assuring consumers that the products they buy are not made under adverse labor conditions here or abroad." This partnership includes representatives from industry, religion and the civic arena.

Facing further pressure, many companies have adopted "Sourcing Principles and Guidelines," which address from whom they will purchase products. This is an appropriate step for companies to take in analyzing what they will look for when purchasing products from suppliers, whether they are domestic or international suppliers. The Gap, a California-based clothing chain, has already been forced to explore working conditions at one of its suppliers in El Salvador.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is involved in Third World countries through Ten Thousand Villages, formerly Self-Help Crafts. Doug Dirks, Ten Thousand Villages Canada director, says, "We do as much as we can to avoid buying from people who use child labor or utilize dangerous working conditions. In most cases our products come from areas where we have MCC personnel and can monitor their production."

Since MCC sells carpets made in Pakistan, they work with a Pakistani Christian who oversees the process to assure child labor is not utilized.

Dirks notes that in some villages, children may be used in family projects, just as children work on family farms in North America. Care is taken to insure that children attend school and are not being abused. "We know people who are living in the areas and can make sure our guidelines are upheld," Dirks says.

Looking at labels doesn't tell us how a product was made. Just because it says "Made in USA" or "Made in Canada" does not necessarily mean it was made under satisfactory working conditions. What can a consumer do? Here are four suggestions:

1. Pay attention to where products are manufactured and request sourcing policies from retailers. A courteous response probably means the company is sensitive to the issues. Hostility may mean the company doesn't know and doesn't care.

2. Think before boycotting a company or product. Boycotting is seldom helpful because it often just throws the most needy out of work.

3. Visit the U.S. Department of Labor's Internet Web site (http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/nosweat/trends.htm). Manufacturers and retailers listed here generally have clearly stated and positive sourcing policies and practices.

4. Engage in conversation with people who have worked in developing countries. They can often provide a perspective that is not available through the public press.

We live in a global, interconnected world. Many companies want to act responsibly within that context. Companies that look the other way will face a rising wave of opposition from religious groups, consumers and the government. Companies that work at finding solutions to these challenges need our support.

News

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Christian peacemakers 'get in the way'

Washington (CPT)—Storytelling, celebration and a protest at the Pentagon were all part of the third Peacemaker Congress held here Dec. 27-30, 1996, sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams and New Call to Peacemaking.

New Call coordinator John Stoner, Akron, Pa., encouraged about 150 attenders to tell stories of how they have been part of the struggle for peace, reflected in the conference theme, "Joining the Nonviolent Struggle—Getting in the Way."

Kathleen Kern, still recovering from jet lag after her return from CPT work in Hebron, brought greetings from Hebron University students who at the time were carrying out a series of initiatives to reopen their university. (It reopened Dec. 28, 1996.)

"The situation in Hebron is grim, but we highlight the people who are operating on outrageous hope," she said.

David Hiebert

Outrageous hope: *A reporter interviews Christian Peacemaker Teams steering committee member Marilyn Miller (left) and CPT director Gene Stoltzfus.*

Kern, who has just finished her three-year term as a full-time Christian Peacemaker Corps (CPC) member, was active in all of CPT's major projects. She noted that her coming back from Hebron to her hometown of Rochester, N.Y., elicited a much different response from her return from Haiti the previous year.

"I found that there were attempts to discredit me when I told of human rights abuses by the Israelis," she said. When Christians try to dialogue with Jews, the subject of Israeli-Palestinian conflicts is often taboo.

"Can Christians and Jews talk about Israel and Palestine?" she asked. "I don't know if we can. I only know we must."

A CPT initiative introduced at the Congress on Dec. 28, "A Pledge by Christians to Our Jewish Neighbors," will be distributed among CPT-supportive churches and communities as an instrument to simultaneously confront anti-Semitism and Israeli human rights abuses against Palestinians (see page 14).

Afternoon workshop sessions rounded out the second day's schedule. Topics included overviews of CPT work in Haiti, Bosnia and Chiapas, Mexico, war-tax resistance, witness to the Religious Right and a tour of the Columbia Heights neighborhood, site of a CPT urban peacemaking project from 1994 to 1996.

Congress attendees gathered in the evening for a concert by singer-songwriter Mike Stern.

"We are not called to be passive —love confronts the oppressor," said plenary speaker Art Gish, Athens, Ohio, on the third day of the Congress. "I have a vision for a church that keeps 'getting in the way.'" Gish related stories from his work with CPT in Hebron, West Bank.

Congress attenders shared their own visions for CPT in the open forum that followed Gish's presentation. Calls for CPT to continue its work in urban North America and to embody a lifestyle of simplicity and personal connections focused the discussion.

CPT director Gene Stoltzfus said, "It was a room full of energy. These open discussions are at our center."

Amy Babcock, a student at Bluffton (Ohio) College, shared from her recent study tour course to the Middle East.

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Inside the news

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Center for Colony Mennonites plans expansion / p. 18

Retired couple keeps busy with volunteer work / p. 19

The Great Plains Seminary Education Program class for the spring semester is "Thinking Ethically," with Duane Friesen of Bethel College as instructor. The class will run Tuesday evenings from Feb. 4 to May 6. For information, contact Jacob T. Friesen, Director, Great Plains Seminary Education Program, P.O. Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117, (316) 283-6300.

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MennoLink, the Internet "bulletin board service" for Mennonite-related topics, would like to hear from individuals, groups and organizations interested in sponsoring MennoLink or purchasing advertising. The goal is to receive enough income so that dues will not need to be collected from individual MennoLink subscribers to cover operating expenses, equipment purchases and a part-time paid position. Contact Jon.Harder@MennoLink.org.

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Mennonite Board of Mission's Voluntary Service and the General Conference Mennonite Church's Mennonite Voluntary Service staff have helped Mennonite Mutual Aid design a program for "matching VS scholarships." These require a 50-50 match by the applicant's congregation and would help repay as much as $9,000 in student loans for any volunteer who served three years in a recognized Anabaptist service program. For more information, call MMA at 1-800-348-7468. (*Christy Risser*)

The *Door* reports that Innovative Marketing Alliance is publishing a bulletproof, pocket-sized Bible. "While its fundamental function is to provide the spiritual assurance that comes from carrying God's Word next to the heart," says the company's ad for "God's Armour New Testament," "its anti-ballistic qualities built into the cover provide a reminder of the world we live in." (*Salt of the Earth*)

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The Institute for Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., will offer classes and workshops in conflict transformation this spring and summer. Courses are arranged in five- and seven-day intensive formats. Class sizes will be limited to encourage a participatory approach, instructor-student interaction and classroom diversity. Application deadline is Feb. 20. Call (540) 432-4490; fax (540) 432-4449; e-mail ctprogram@emu.edu.

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Last November, leaders of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church in Guatemala dedicated a piece of land they had purchased earlier. About 200 people, mostly youth, carried 2,000 bagged trees to the high place where the dedication was held, and then, machetes in hand, scattered over the hillside to plant the seedlings. The previous land owner had deforested the terrain for lumber, without replanting. New buildings will house the offices of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church and a new study center. Some day, they also hope to construct a small chapel and several retreat cabins at the top of the mountain. Ed Stamm Miller of Mennonite Central Committee is helping to coordinate work teams from North America to work alongside K'ekchi' volunteers to construct the buildings from mud blocks, a new technology the K'ekchi' have recently learned. There are still openings for teams. Preference is for people with construction skills and/or past construction experience. Contact Stamm Miller at (717) 859-1151. (*Carol L. Wert*)

She said she was finding meaning in taking risks for peace.

On Dec. 30, more than 200 Christian peacemakers took their own risks at the Pentagon as they offered up empty grocery sacks, toy guns, used syringes and pieces of condemned buildings, symbols of the "harvest" of military spending in North America. The peacemakers circled the building, stopping on each side to sing, pray and bring forward their symbols.

"We have come to the Pentagon from across America to lament the harvest of violence that our nation is reaping in the form of unemployment, hunger, poverty, homelessness, depression, crime and despair," said a statement read aloud at the vigil.

At the final stop, the participants sang "Kum ba yah" as members of the Atlantic Life Community, a coalition of Christian communities on the East Coast devoted to nonviolent resistance to war and violence, poured their blood on the Pentagon's facade in witness to the shed blood of victims of war. Police arrested three ALC members.

Peacemaker Congress III closed with a worship service led by the youth who attended the congress, who invited reflections on the witness at the Pentagon.

The peacemakers departed with renewed courage to keep "in the way" in 1997, a year that includes a "new harvest" of 16 CPC members.

A PLEDGE BY CHRISTIANS TO OUR JEWISH NEIGHBORS

The following pledge was developed by Christian Peacemaker Teams Hebron and distributed at the Peacemaker Congress Dec. 28, 1996, in Washington:

On Nov. 18, 1996, an Israeli military court in Jaffa sentenced four Israeli undercover unit officers to one hour in jail and fined them one agora (about one-third of a cent) for assassinating the wrong Palestinian in 1993. This incident reflects the contempt for Palestinian life present in most sectors of Israeli society.

Israeli policy supports the torture and murder of Palestinians, the confiscation of their land, the demolition of their houses, the closure of their schools, the restriction of their water supply and their imprisonment without charge. ...

The worldwide church has been part of [the] ineffectual response to Israel's egregious human rights abuses. As heirs to a tradition that sanctioned the dehumanization and persecution of Jews for centuries and paved the way for the Nazi Holocaust, we are loathe to cause any more suffering to the Jewish community. We know that criticism by Christians of Israel has been interpreted by some as criticism of Judaism. We also know that contempt for Jews still exists in our societies and that Jewish fears of renewed persecution are not without basis. ...

Therefore, we ... make the following pledge:

We will not let comments that reflect a contempt for Jews or Judaism pass unchallenged. ...

We will commit ourselves to fighting the political, spiritual and economic forces that can lead to genocide. ...

Should evil circumstances in our societies lead to a renewed persecution of our Jewish neighbors, near or far, it is our intention to risk ostracism, arrest and, if necessary, our lives, to protect Jews. ...

However, because of our concern for human rights, inspired by the Jewish prophets and a Jewish carpenter from Nazareth, we can no longer pay the price exacted by some people for meaningful Jewish-Christian dialogue—that of silence regarding Israel's human rights abuses. We believe silence makes us complicit in the injustices at work in Israel and Palestine.

We realize our intention to confront Israeli abuses of power may mean we cannot have harmonious relationships with some of our Jewish friends. We will mourn the loss of these relationships. We will also pray for the eventual restoration of these relationships as we pray for a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians. And until such time as the restoration of these relationships occurs, we will celebrate those Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims who have worked diligently and sacrificially for justice in the Holy Land.

Christian peacemakers confront Toys-R-Us

Chicago (CPT)—Led by "little drummer boy" Sam Stackhouse, 9, of North Suburban Mennonite Church, Mundelein, Ill., Christian Peacemaker Teams' (CPT) fourth witness against violent toys took place on New Year's Day.

Some 40 people marched to the Toys-R-Us store on State Street in downtown Chicago, calling on the retail chain to stop selling war toys, violent video games and action figures that teach children violence.

The witness coincided with the beginning of CPT's annual nonviolence training for 16 new members of its full-time and reserve peacemaker corps.

CPT supporters and trainees were joined by the choir of a Filipino United Church of Christ and other Chicago peacemakers. Abel Amago, a member of the Filipino church, is the first ordained minister to take part in the CPT peacemaker corps training.

"Marching to the beat of a different drummer," the group walked from the steps of the Chicago Art Institute to Toys-R-Us, three blocks away. Accompanied by the singing of alternative lyrics to the tunes of familiar Christmas carols, the group attempted to enter the store but was turned away by security personnel.

CPT trainees and volunteers who entered the store before other marchers arrived were led out by security after they began a "teach-in," sang carols and unfurled a banner that read, "Kids learn what they play. War toys teach violence."

The witness outside the store concluded with a teach-in on the sidewalk and a performance by the Filipino church's chancel choir singing alternative words to "The Little Drummer Boy" (see box).

The witness was organized following personal conversation and correspondence between CPT and Toys-R-Us. CPT congratulated Toys-R-Us for taking "look-alike" guns—toy guns that look like real ones—off its shelves. However, the group continued to challenge the nation's leading toy chain to follow the lead of other companies that do not sell violent toys.

Violent toys "send children the wrongful message that violence is just a game," CPT wrote to Toys-R-Us chief operating officer Robert Nakasone. "We continue to be disturbed that a toy store would market the equivalent of R-rated products that are not suitable for children."

The 16-member CPT training group is the largest in the history of the 10-year-old organization. Trainees participate in three weeks of study, worship and exercises in preparation for assignments in situations of conflict. Christian Peacemaker Teams are currently active in Haiti and Hebron, West Bank.

The Little Drummer Boy (adapted)

"Come," they told me, pa-rum pa-pum-pum
"To Toys-R-Us and see," pa-rum pa-pum-pum
"Our finest toys and games," pa-rum pa-pum-pum
"To help your children play," pa-rum pa-pum-pum
Rum-pa-pum-pum, rum-pa-pum-pum.
Then we saw them, pa-rum pa-pum-pum,
Ninjas and guns.

Toys that teach our kids to glorify war
And destroy enemies are here in this store.
Yes, GI Joe and all his armaments
That numb our children's hearts and every sense
To the consequence of real violence.
So our children learn, pa-rum pa-pum-pum
That killing is fun.

With a message of peace we must
Unite this New Year's Day at Toys-R-Us.
Researchers tell us children learn what they play.
They need to learn that violence isn't OK,
War is not play, peace is the way.
Take the images of violence and gore
Out of your store.

Of Americans earning less than $30,000 a year, 61 percent believe "the meek shall inherit the earth," says *Harper's*. Of Americans earning more than $60,000, 36 percent believe the meek will inherit. (*The Marketplace*)

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The Toronto *Globe and Mail* reports that Israel, hoping for increased tourism, is planning to capitalize on interest in Megiddo—the biblical Armageddon—with a "virtual Megiddo" that will take people back in time to explain the site's significance. Actors and holograms will create visions such as a typical street scene in the time of King Solomon. Organizers say they will try to avoid "a kitschy approach" to the end of the world, but skeptics have already dubbed the project "Apocalypso." (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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In Richmond, Va., Self-Help Crafts store manager Theresa Johnson was listening to National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" as she drove to work Dec. 9, 1996. Her interest picked up when she heard reporter John Burnett begin a story on alternative ways to give holiday gifts. Johnson's interest turned to surprise, then joy, when Burnett mentioned Self-Help Crafts by name. (Johnson's store will change its name to Ten Thousand Villages in early 1997.) In the report, Burnett compared high-dollar gifts "for the person who has everything" with projects that can help artisans and their families in developing countries. All week, people came into Johnson's store reporting that they had heard the story and wanted to see what the organization was about. In fact, interest in this story was so high that NPR offices in Washington put a recording on their phone message listing the numbers of the six organizations mentioned in the report. This brief mention of the old Self-Help name generated nearly 100 phone calls to the Ten Thousand Villages offices in Akron, Pa., in the following week. (*Larry Guengerich*)

The Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba will hold its 50th annual sessions at the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium in Brandon Feb. 21-22. Contact the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1, (204) 896-1616.

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Over the past six years, since the Persian Gulf War, some 500,000 Iraqi children may have died due to crippling international sanctions, according to a researcher at the Harvard University School of Public Health. Mennonite Central Committee is working to improve health and education for Iraqi children. One of the projects is sending three teams of pediatric surgeons to Iraq for two- to three-week periods to perform operations and help Iraqi surgeons upgrade their skills. The surgeons will need to bring all necessary supplies and medicines. Pediatric surgeons interested in this service opportunity should contact, in Canada, Marsha Jones at (204) 261-6381; in the United States, Prem Dick at (717) 859-1151.

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The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty in Washington says that the five U.S. cities with the "meanest streets," determined by a city's clear intention to expel the homeless, are Atlanta, San Francisco, New York, Dallas and San Diego. Some metropolitan areas were praised for more constructive approaches, however. Seattle, for example, responding to the lack of downtown public toilets, has offered to fund "hygiene centers" to provide free toilets, showers and laundry facilities for homeless people and other city residents. Tucson, Ariz., has created a standing committee of advocates for the homeless in an effort to resolve complaints before turning to law enforcement action. Dade County, Fla. (Miami), has placed a 1 percent tax on meals purchased at restaurants grossing over $400,000 per year to fund facilities and services for the homeless. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

Somali women work to promote peace

Nairobi, Kenya (MCC)—New brides in Somalia traditionally are confined to the house. But one recently married woman joined a group of 24 other Somali women for a meeting here last October, because her husband told her, "If it's for peace, you can go."

The diverse group from various clans gathered with a common purpose: to discuss how Somali women can foster peace instead of fueling their country's ongoing civil war.

Women play a unique role in Somali culture. Many marriages are arranged across clan lines, and when clan warfare erupts, a woman's brothers and father may end up fighting against her husband and sons.

By the end of the workshop, the women agreed they would take advantage of their positions as wives, mothers and daughters to be leaders in promoting peace and encouraging reconciliation in their society.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) contributed $5,000 U.S./$7,800 Cdn. to Save Somali Women and Children to hold this first-of-a-kind peace workshop for women.

"It was awe-inspiring for me to be part of this group," says Bertha Beachy, who addressed the gathering on three different occasions. Beachy, from Goshen, Ind., directs Somalia programs for MCC and Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Several musicians and poets attended and composed some pieces on the spot. The women joined together in traditional Somali women's dances and talked together late into the night.

Although the organizers tried to schedule events, soon they "took no note of the time because participants didn't want to stop for a break," says Beachy.

Of the 25 women who attended the workshop, eight came from inside Somalia and the others were Somali refugees living in Kenya.

Save Somali Woman and Children, the group that initiated the workshop, was founded in 1992 by a group of educated Somali women. One of the group's foundational beliefs is that peace is key to improving life in their war-torn country. *MCC Information Services*

Sharing 'SALT' and light

Mark Beach

Heidi Beachy, a participant in Mennonite Central Committee's SALT program, interacts with children at the Stansberry Children's Home in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Beachy, who grew up in Paraguay, where her parents, Jonathan and Ruth Beachy, served with MCC for 14 years, is spending a year at the home for orphaned and abandoned children. While she has had some tough adjustments to her assignment, she writes that she has strongly felt God's close presence. Beachy is one of 28 young people serving in the SALT (Serving And Learning Together) program in 16 countries in 1996-97. In year-long assignments in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, SALTers are hosted by families or a local institution and interact closely with the local church. Young adults ages 18 to 24 are invited to apply for the 1997-98 SALT program by Feb. 15; assignments begin in July. For an application form or further information, contact, in the United States, Stephanie Brooks or Jan Siemens, MCC Personnel Services, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, (717) 859-1151; in Canada, Lydia Braun, Human Resources, MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9, (204) 261-6381.

Mennos called to join evangelism, peacemaking

Archbold, Ohio (MBM/MCC)—It is Friday night in early November 1996, and 800 chairs face the stage. "God's People Make Peace" proclaims the sign leading the way into the Peace Factory, an interactive exhibit on nonviolence and peacemaking. Will anyone come to hear a message of evangelism and peacemaking?

Neither are popular topics, say Paul and Ann Gingrich, commissioned as "peace evangelists" by the Mennonite Church (MC).

Siegrid Richer

Pinball wizards? *Actually, Paul and Ann Gingrich are joining Ron Roth (center), a volunteer for the interactive Peace Factory exhibit, in a cooperative game. The Gingriches are serving as traveling peace evangelists through this summer.*

Both peacemaking and evangelism seem to evoke negative images in the minds of many, they say. Peacemaking seems to speak of political action and militant demonstrations. At the same time, today's Mennonites picture evangelism in terms of old-fashioned tent revival meetings or handing out religious tracts.

Revival meetings are no longer in style, and only popular evangelists draw large crowds. Yet the Gingriches were pleased with a weekend turnout of more than 800 people for the Peace Evangelism Festival in northwest Ohio. Even Friday night's session, the smallest, with 200 people, was not a disappointment, they say. As they travel the country with their peace evangelism message, small crowds are the norm, not the exception.

Like modern-day circuit-riding preachers, they have taken the gospel of peace on the road. The Gingriches will end their two-year assignment, sponsored by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), at Orlando 97, the MC biennial assembly. Already by August 1996, their speaking schedule was booked through the end of their term.

Making peace a priority resulted from a decision made at the MC assembly at Philadelphia in 1993, Paul says. There was a strong call to bring peace back to the center of Christ's message preached by the Mennonite church. "It is at the heart of the gospel," he adds, "central to what we believe."

Over the years, evangelism and peacemaking have become separated, with evangelism viewed in terms of an individual, personal relationship with God and peacemaking linked to broader social issues and concerns. Yet the two are inseparable, the Gingriches say—being right with God demands that we also make peace with one another.

In his capacity as president of MBM, Paul was part of the Peace and Justice Committee in 1993. Because his retirement from MBM was imminent, it was no surprise when the call came for the Gingriches to serve as the first peace evangelists.

They admit they struggled with accepting the call as a couple. Although peacemaking has been a life commitment for both, first in 16 years as missionaries in Ethiopia and later in separate careers, working together would be a new experience.

"I saw myself in a supportive role," Ann says. "Paul is the one who has been a preacher for 40 years."

Their ultimate decision, however, was to accept the assignment on an equal basis. They agree it has been a great learning experience—"definitely the right way," Paul says.

Their first task was to visit peacemakers in Africa and Ireland and record the stories which now illustrate the message they bring to North American Mennonites.

Throughout the weekend in Archbold, the Gingriches challenged all ages to take Christ's call to peacemaking seriously in every aspect of life and took turns sharing stories of today's peacemakers.

"Close your eyes and picture 'peace' in your mind," Ann tells those at Friday night's worship. For most, the

Consumers have told pollsters they would pay extra for goods they knew were made without sweatshop labor. In a nationwide survey conducted by ICR Research Group for Marymount University's Center for Ethical Concerns and its department of fashion design and merchandising, 79 percent of the people surveyed said they would avoid retailers they knew sold clothing made in sweatshops. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

• • •

Kentucky's Catholic bishops have reissued their pastoral letter opposing the death penalty. "Choose Life: Reflections on the Death Penalty" was first released in 1984 by bishops of Covington, Lexington, Louisville and Owensboro. "Much has changed and yet much has remained the same," the bishops write. Kentucky's last execution was in 1962, but with three men on death row in the final round of court appeals, there could be an execution scheduled this year. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

• • •

Female members of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians staged a symbolic walkout at the organization's fourth annual assembly, held Dec. 10-18, 1996, in Tagaytay, Philippines. During the evening plenary session on Dec. 18, about 30 nuns, women pastors and lay theologians left the gathering of more than 80 theologians from the Third World and from minority groups in the United States in order to prod their male counterparts into undertaking a serious discussion of gender issues. The gesture resulted in an apology to women participants, the requested discussion and some changes in the assembly—for example, in the future, 50 percent of major papers will be delivered by women. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

Written opinions and memos regarding homosexuality and homophobia on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus were apparently the targets of an arson attack at the college Nov. 29, 1996, (during the Thanksgiving break). The messages had been posted on the college opinion board and were ignited sometime between 3:30 and 4:30 a.m., damaging the board and the wall behind it. By the time campus security arrived, the fire was out, but Goshen police were called to the scene and are investigating the fire as an arson. ***(Goshen College Record)***

• • •

The Japan Anabaptist Center in Tokyo recently collected 153 pairs of reading glasses for Salvadoran weavers. Mennonite Central Committee asked for the eyeglasses for weavers who were attending a Self-Help Crafts workshop in Chalantenango, El Salvador. Japanese Mennonite Naoya Tateno put up a sign in his eyeglass shop that read, "Give used glasses for Salvadoran weavers." Keido Ktaoka, who saw the request in a church bulletin, collected a dozen pairs. The reading glasses were shipped to El Salvador Nov. 13, 1996.

• • •

The Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office is hosting its spring seminar April 13-15. Titled "Planting Seeds of Hope: The Ministry of Political Advocacy," the conference will help people of faith explore the biblical basis of advocacy and will address specific policy issues through workshops on a variety of policy issues of concern to Anabaptists and visits to legislators' offices. The seminar will also explore how hope can be found in political advocacy. Speakers with theological, activist and congressional backgrounds will address the theme. The Washington Office offers a reduced rate of $50 for registration before Feb. 28. After that date, registration is $60. Contact the MCC Washington Office, 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Suite 502, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 544-6564, e-mail mccwash@igc.apc.org.

room dissolved into quiet streams, rippling brooks and white doves.

Not so for Samuel Doe, who joined the Gingriches for the weekend. Now studying conflict transformation at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., with support from MBM and MCC, Doe escaped from Liberia last May with his wife and daughter.

When Doe closed his eyes, he saw "children lined up in front of their homes and bang, bang, they fall in a pool of blood," shot by fighters who are merely other children carrying guns.

"How can I reconcile that with your ideas of peace?" Doe asked. "In a world of civil war where children are killers, in a nation where 60,000 fighters are below the age of 15, we must ask ourselves, What is peace? We must come to a new understanding of peace. The church must prepare to create a culture of peace." *Siegrid Richer*

Center for Colony Mennonites plans expansion

Santa Cruz, Bolivia (MCC)—It's a library and reading room. It's a "village square" where folks trade community, family and farm news. It's a rest station for weary farmers—sometimes their wives and children, too—who have come to buy or sell in the city market. It's even a mini-store for items not easily obtainable, such as school slates made in Germany and herbal medicines. And it's an informal counseling center where a caring couple befriends visitors.

It's the Centro Menno, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-sponsored ministry to German-speaking Colony Mennonites in Bolivia, and it's bursting at the seams.

With tight space and rising rents, MCC Bolivia has decided to build a new Centro Menno on MCC grounds here in Santa Cruz. Already located on the property are MCC Bolivia offices, a home for MCC Bolivia's host couple, two houses with rooms for rural-based staff when they come into the city and a basketball court and small classroom MCC workers use for a street children's program.

CENTRO MENNO

Mark Beach

Space needed: *Edna and John Peters manage the Centro Menno, serving Colony Mennonites in Bolivia, which is so well-used that expansion plans are now under way.*

MCC couple Edna and John Peters of Saskatoon, directors of Centro Menno, say the center serves as an important communication link among people without phones and who travel only by horse and buggy. And reading materials are especially valued by people with no other access to them.

At the end of 1995, a census revealed 28,563 German-speaking Mennonites in 25 colonies in Bolivia's Santa Cruz state. Centro Menno staff see an average of 300 colony visitors per week.

The Peterses anticipate that this number will grow, in part because the Centro is becoming more well-known and in part because the population it serves is burgeoning.

The birth rate among colony families is high, with an average 10 children. In addition, Mennonites from Alberta, Mexico and Paraguay have recently begun moving to Bolivia in search of farmland, forming new communities there. Seven new colonies broke ground in 1996.

MCC is encouraging North Americans to join or form work teams to help build the new Centro Menno. In addition to the bricks laid, MCC hopes such interaction will build ties between North American Mennonites and Bolivian Mennonite colonists. The new center, to have 1,600 square feet/150 square meters of space, is due to open in July or August.

Editor's note: *People interested in participating in a work group this winter and spring should contact Tony Enns, director of Kanadier Concerns for MCC Canada, at (204) 261-6381, or any provincial MCC office. Work group participants will be asked to cover their own transportation costs to Bolivia. Priority will be given to people who can speak Low German and/or Spanish.*

Retired couple keep busy with volunteer work

Dave Linscheid

Winifred and Lester Ewy

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Lester and Winifred Ewy defy some of the stodgy stereotypes about older people prevalent in North American culture.

While the retired couple from Newton have spent some of their time and money traveling to Florida, it is not to soak up the sun's rays or play shuffleboard.

The Ewys have donated part of their "golden years" to helping young, urban churches in North America renovate their meeting places.

As the coordinators for the Abraham and Sarah Caravans, they have related to congregations in San Diego; Miami; Toronto; Oklahoma City; Philadelphia; Denver; Duluth, Minn., and Pismo Beach, Calif.

It has been a broadening and fulfilling experience, say the Ewys, who have led this project since fall 1993. The Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church initiated the Abraham and Sarah Caravans to help put into action a resolution to plant and support new congregations.

Through the caravans, say the Ewys, participants experience the adventure of traveling to new places, the opportunity for spiritual renewal and the chance to contribute to the work of the wider church.

For the Ewys, volunteering is about as natural as getting out of bed in the morning. "We both grew up in Christian homes, where we were taught to help where needed," says Winifred.

Their daughter's death in November 1990 encouraged them to volunteer even more. "We had a deeper sense of the value of it because we experienced firsthand the compassion of people from inside and outside the church," says Lester.

The Ewys will retire as the coordinators of the Abraham and Sarah Caravans this spring, but plan to stay active in their local community.

CHM needs retired volunteers to serve as regional coordinators for the caravans. Contact Mennonite Voluntary Service, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, (316) 283-5100, or MVS Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, (204) 888-6781.

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The *London Times* reports that Bible sales are slumping in the United States. Preliminary figures hint that 1996 sales will be 10 percent below 1995's. June sales figures were off 41 percent from the same month in 1995. June is typically a big sales month, with people buying Bibles as graduation and wedding gifts. Reasons cited for the slump range from "collapse of morality" to "Presidential politics." (*AFA Journal*)

• • •

Spring continuing education offerings by the Alban Institute include Shepherding the Spiritual Life of Congregations, April 7-10, Baltimore; Conflict Management in Congregational Life, April 14-18, Seattle; The Inviting Church: Ministering to New Members, April 25-26, Minneapolis; Managing Conflict in Small Congregations, May 5-7, Cincinnati; Family Systems and Congregations, May 21-23, Philadelphia. Write to Registrar, Education Department, The Alban Institute, Inc., Suite 433 North, 4550 Montgomery Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814-3341; (301) 718-4407, ext. 230; 1-800-486-1318, ext. 230; fax (301) 718-1958.

• • •

Relatives came from as far as Ohio to Cowan Elementary School near Whitesburg, Ky., in December 1996 to join sell-out crowds and watch nieces, nephews and grandchildren perform in a dramatization of C.S. Lewis' well-known fantasy *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Julie McMullin, a Mennonite Central Committee Appalachia worker, directed the eighth-grade production, performed twice for capacity crowds of 150. McMullin, who adapted the book for the stage, says the production mobilized the community, built excitement about fine arts and encouraged students' self-esteem. The play also raised more than $2,000 for an upcoming first-time-ever class trip to Baltimore and Washington. More performances have been scheduled. (*Andrea Schrock Wenger*)

Two top contemporary Christian musicians, Michael Card, an evangelical Protestant, and John Michael Talbot, a Catholic, decided to do an album and a concert tour together to celebrate their shared faith and admiration for each other's music. They were surprised when a Protestant church in Tempe, Ariz., canceled their scheduled concert in September, then *Moody Magazine*, an evangelical publication, declined to advertise *Brother to Brother*, and finally, a Protestant church in Toronto canceled a solo concert by Talbot. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

• • •

Three Mennonites were among the nearly 90 people from 16 countries who met Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 1996, in London to advance the cause of "Taxes for Peace Not War." Marian Franz, Washington; Cesar Flores, Honduras, and Susan Balzer, Hesston, Kan., joined other members of various peace-tax support and war-tax resisters' groups. Speakers reported on peace-tax legislation proposals in various countries, expressing hope that if one country passes a peace-tax bill, others will follow suit. The United States became the first country to initiate peace-tax bill proposals, in 1972; the bill has yet to pass. (*Susan Miller Balzer*)

• • •

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites applications for the Church Leadership Award, which provides a three-year full-tuition scholarship to a student planning to enter the Master of Divinity program. Applicants must be members of a congregation in the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church or a related Mennonite group. Application deadline is March 15 for the 1997-98 academic year. One award will be granted for the 1997-98 school year. This will be the second such award AMBS has granted. Contact Andrew Kreider, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999; 1-800-964-2627; e-mail admissions@ambs.edu.

Record

DEATHS

Alice Bachert, Stirling Avenue Church, Kitchener, Ont., died Nov. 17, 1996, at age 93. She served with COM and other organizations in Costa Rica and Colombia from 1930 to 1968.

Anne Penner, Bethel Church, Winnipeg, died Dec. 26, 1996, at age 80. She served with COM as a nurse and hospital administrator in India 1946 to 1979.

Abe H. Peters, LaGrange, Ind., died Dec. 22, 1996, at age 80. He served as pastor at First Church, Geary, Okla., 1946-1951; Burrton (Kan.) Church, 1951-57; Friedenstahl Church, Tampa, Kan., 1957-1960; Fredonia (Kan.) Church, 1960-66; Topeka (Ind.) Church, 1966-1972, and in various prison ministries in Indiana 1972-1995.

Gerhard M. Peters died Jan. 11 at age 78. He served as pastor at Ebenezer Church, Gotebo, Okla., 1948-1953; First Church, Burns, Kan., 1953-59; Hutterthal Church, Freeman, S.D., 1963-69, and Bergthal Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan., 1969-1984.

MINISTERS

Don Blom is pastor at West New Hopedale Church, Ringwood, Okla.

Verner Friesen is interim conference pastor for the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan.

Bill and **Helen Kruger** will be pastors at Foothills Church, Calgary, beginning Sept. 1.

Don and **Jan Rheinheimer** were installed as co-pastors at Mountain Community Mennonite Church, Palmer Lake, Colo., Jan. 12.

Peter Voran is interim pastor at Salem Church, Freeman, S.D.

Dave Wilson was installed as pastor at Carman (Man.) Church Oct. 6, 1996.

COM—Commission on Overseas Mission

WORKERS

Bill Block has resigned as associate executive secretary for pastoral services for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, effective this summer.

Eric E. Boschmann, First Church, Indianapolis, is production assistant for Faith & Life Press, Newton, Kan.

Peter and **Rose Fehr**, Morden (Man.) Bergthaler Church, are COM mission associates for three months, serving at the Bible school in Steinreich, Mexico.

Ralph Lebold has resigned as associate executive secretary for ministerial education for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, effective this summer, due to health reasons.

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Interim pastor: A small, vibrant urban Anabaptist congregation committed to peace and evangelism seeks half-time pastor from Jan. 1, 1998, to Aug. 31, 1998, while current pastor is on sabbatical leave. Potential also for part-time service with Mennonite Central Committee office at the United Nations.

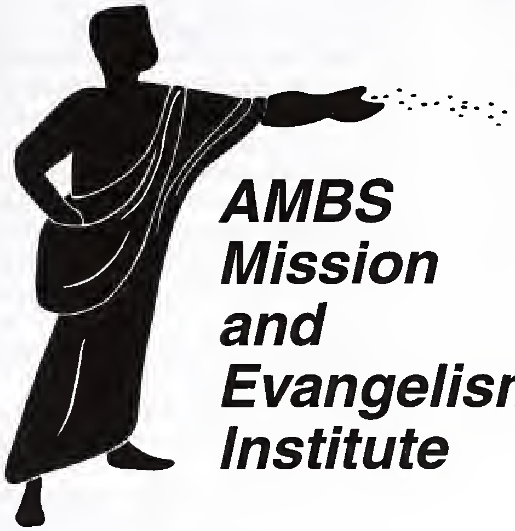
All inquiries to **Interim Pastoral Search Committee, Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003-2889**.

Manager and guest host for **Menno House** in New York City. Half-time, live-in position for mature individual or couple to begin by June 1.

For information and application: **Menno House Board, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003-2889**; phone and fax **(212) 673-7970**; e-mail **nymcc@aol.com**.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. is seeking applicants for the position of Mennonite Conciliation Service **staff associate for urban peacemaking**, based in Akron, Pa. This two-year, full-time position is available on either a salaried, local service worker or service-worker arrangement. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants should have experience/training in peace and justice concerns, strong urban experience, especially with racially and ethnically diverse communities, and well-developed writing, teaching and public speaking skills.

For more information contact **Personnel Department, Prem Dick/Goldie Kuhns, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151**. Applications due **Feb. 14**.



AMBS Mission and Evangelism Institute

Session I: July 8-17
in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Gospel and Western Culture
Wilbert Shenk, Fuller Theological Seminary
Shaping the Missional Congregation
Lois Barrett, and Marilyn Miller,
Commission on Home Ministries,
General Conference Mennonite Church

Session II: July 18-26
in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Genesis 1-11 and Mission
Nzash Lumeye, International School of Mission, Kinshasa, Zaire
Theological/Mission Agenda from Latin America
Robert J. Suderman, Conference of Mennonites in Canada

Session III: August 4-15
in Elkhart, Indiana

Evangelism in Early Christianity
Alan Kreider, Center for the Study of Christianity and Culture, Regents College, Oxford, England
The Challenge of New Religious Movements
James Krabill, Mennonite Board of Missions
Planting Reproductive Churches
David Chiu, Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia
Multi-ethnic Ministries in Urban Context
John H. Powell, Church Ministries,
King Urban Life Center, Houghton College
Sally Schreiner, Reba Church at Rogers Park, Chicago
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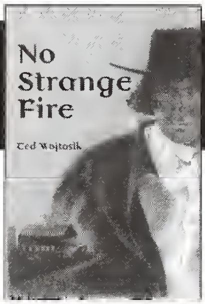

Six Amish barns burn to the ground one night in the Big Valley of central Pennsylvania. Jacob Hostetler, a young Amish man who left home months ago, is the prime suspect. What happens to a youth who leaves his Amish community, tempted by the outside world? Wojtasik's novel accurately depicts the simple and faithful lives of Amish in the complicated times of the 1990s.

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Reviews

BOOKS

EPISTLES REVISITED

Did I Betray the Gospel? The Letters of Paul and the Place of Women *by S. Wesley Ariarajah (WCC Publications, 1996, 58 pages)*

Reviewed by Jacob W. Elias, Elkhart, Ind.

This little book contains four letters in which the author imagines what Paul might say today about what he wrote on women almost 2,000 years ago. Asked to write this book as part of a World Council of Churches (WCC) emphasis on justice for women, Ariarajah, a Methodist minister from Sri Lanka, decided on the letter format, since Paul himself intervened pastorally by means of letters.

In 1987, the WCC declared 1988-1998 the "Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women." Ariarajah was a member of a team that visited various parts of the church in Pakistan in order to take stock of circumstances facing women in that culture. He discovered major disagreements about the place of women in the church. He also found that confusion often centered on the interpretation of the Bible, especially several passages in Paul's letters. Since this was also a common theme among other such teams, Ariarajah was invited to prepare study material about Paul's views on women and their roles in the church.

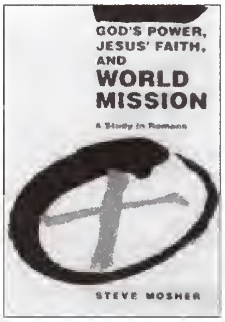
Two of the four "letters from Paul" in this book address Christians in general about the meaning of the main texts dealing with women and several current issues. The other two are addressed to imaginary individuals: a pastor named Daniel whose congregation is divided about the issue of the ordination of women, and a believer named Marcus who is upset about the apparent disregard of scriptural teaching in churches that accept women as pastors.

Reading these four "new letters" from a contemporary Paul seeking to interpret the first-century Paul to 20th-century readers was largely a frustrating exercise. The approach seems artificial. However, for readers who are less linear and rational in their thought processes, these "letters" might prove insightful or even persuasive. Ariarajah's treatment of the controversial texts, though necessarily brief, often suggests fruitful ways (though not the only possible ones) of viewing these passages.

POWER FOR MISSION

God's Power, Jesus' Faith and World Mission: A Study in Romans *by Steve Mosher (Herald Press, 1996, 360 pages, $19.95 U.S./$28.50 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Jacob W. Elias, Elkhart, Ind.



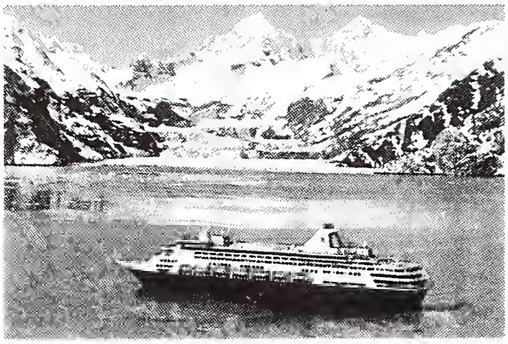
The apostle Paul writes as a missionary. This remarkably simple premise undergirds Mosher's distinctive study of the epistle to the Romans. Instead of weighing exegetical arguments and monitoring scholarly debates Mosher reflects on how Paul's letter to the Christians in first-century Rome speaks to the church today about mission at the end of the 20th century.

I cringed occasionally when reading this book. Mosher mentions the "academic dirt" through which dissertations on Romans have to plow before they produce fruit. He laments that theological training takes place "in the power structures of reputable seminaries" rather than in informal settings in the field. The validity of my ministry as a professor who teaches Romans at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seemed to be under question.

Yet I also resonate with most of Mosher's rereading of Romans. The title of his book summarizes its argument and content.

God's power raised Jesus from the dead. This same power is available to the church for its mission of love and justice and reconciliation in the world.

Somewhat strange to many of our ears is the notion of Jesus' faith. Readers of Romans 3:22 in the King James Version know that God's righteousness is made known by the faith of Jesus Christ. Mosher rightly points out that Jesus' faithfulness unto death reveals God's answer to sin and injustice in the world. I quibble somewhat with Mosher's translation of Romans 1:16-17, which he says came to him through a sudden illumination of truth from God. However, my questions would be better discussed personally and in an attitude of prayerful openness with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an open Bible before us.

The bulk of Mosher's book consists of personal, theological and practical reflections on world mission. He includes chapters from the history of missions and anecdotes from his own experiences as a missionary in the Philippines and in urban America. These sections are often provocative and troubling, especially when seen from the perspective of middle-class privilege.

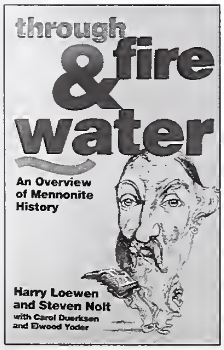
TRUE DISCIPLES

Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History *by Harry Loewen and Steven Nolt, with Carol Duerksen and Elwood Yoder (Herald Press, 1996, 350 pages, $14.95 U.S./ $21.50 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Ardie S. Goering, Goessel, Kan.

If you're ever tempted to believe that simple language equals simple ideas, this is a good book to read.

It is an introductory book intended for youth and young adults, people new to the Mennonite tradition and anyone else wanting to learn more about Mennonite origins. Thus, the book is written in simple language, with short sentences, clear organization and an easy-to-understand style.


through fire & water
An Overview of Mennonite History
Harry Loewen and Steven Nolt
with Carol Duerksen and Elwood Yoder

But with its subject matter encompassing a time line from the early Christian church to the present, the authors' task is anything but small. And because they use this description of church history to prod readers into thinking about fundamental questions of Mennonite identity, neither is their job simple.

Because I am not a historian, I cannot speak to the accuracy of the authors' perspective. But I certainly found their thoughtful narrative of Mennonite history compelling.

Photographs, illustrations and cartoons are sprinkled throughout the book, which draws upon personal stories—Helene of Freyberg, an Austrian noblewoman who used her influence to shelter Anabaptists in the 16th century; Anne F. Funk, a Mennonite missionary who died when the Titanic sank in 1912; Siegfried Bartel, a Mennonite and a Germany army officer who heard Russian soldiers singing carols on Christmas Eve in 1941 and later became a pacifist and Mennonite Central Committee executive.

At the end of each of five major sections is a brief commentary with questions such as, "How do you know when your church is faithful?" and, "What does it mean for you to be a peacemaker?" These questions and others prompted me to think about my own baptism at age 24, nine years after catechism, an unconventional act for someone born and raised in my community. It was an attempt to make this Mennonite faith truly my own. And as I read the story of Anabaptists and their earnest, sometimes flawed but often triumphant struggle to be true disciples of Christ, I am reminded why I keep the company I do.

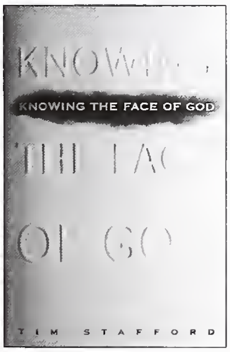
LOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowing the Face of God *by Tim Stafford (Navpress, 1996, 249 pages, $14 U.S.)*

Reviewed by June Mears Driedger, Goshen, Ind.

One of the greatest difficulties faithful people face is how to relate to God. Do we respond to the transcendent God—the mystery and "Other-ness"—or do we embrace the immanent God, nearer and closer to us than we can fathom? It is this tension—or finding a comfortable place on that continuum—on which books on spirituality focus, including this one.

Stafford distinguishes between knowing God and knowing *about* God. He divides the book into two sections to grapple with this: "A Personal Relationship" and "The Face of God." In the first section he describes what it is to have a deep, loving, intimate relationship with a person, then transposes this to God, and he valiantly wrestles with the immanence of God.



In the second section, Stafford writes of the face of God found in Jesus. I expected this to also describe the immanence of God but found instead Stafford invariably returning to the transcendence, the Other-ness, of God. It is a commendable effort but it falls short at times, perhaps because of Stafford's insistence on knowing God through fact, data or senses to the exclusion of silence, surrender and intuition.

This is a good book for people who want to know God and are logical and pragmatic, but not for those who are more inclined to trust intuition and feelings.

Resources

- **Mysteries of Grace and Judgment** is a recording of stories and songs on the Mennonite experience in Russia. The recording—double CD, video or audiocassette—is available from Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, 1-800-313-6226; CD $28.75 Cdn., video $28.75 Cdn., audiocassette $17.25 Cdn. Proceeds benefit MCC refugee work.
- **Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers**, edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1996, $28.95 Cdn.), shows the key role played by women in the emergence of Anabaptism.
- **Living the Vision: Spirituality & Stewardship** by Eleanor Snyder and Ken Hawkley (Faith & Life Press, 1996, $5.95 U.S./$8.50 Cdn.) is the first of a three-part study series to help individuals and congregations live out the Vision: Healing and Hope statement adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.
- **Members in the Military Consultation Bible studies**, by Lois Barrett, can be ordered from Commission on Home Ministries, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; $1.25 U.S. or Canadian equivalent to cover copying and postage.
- **The Message: Job** by Eugene H. Peterson (Navpress, 1996, $12 U.S.) is a rendition of the Book of Job in everyday language.

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Editorial

Being there

Having a vision is one thing. Living it is another. It requires being faithful day by day, keeping one's commitments. In a relationship it requires being there.

When I was younger, I had dreams, like many young people, of accomplishing some great deed that others would applaud. But as I've grown older, reality has chipped away at those dreams, and I've learned from my father something far more important.

He showed me by example the importance of just being there. During his life of employment he would get up each day and do his work. In doing so he provided for his family, which included seven children. He was not perfect; he made mistakes. But he was there. Having lost his own father when he was only 11 years old, he had no model of how to be a father.

In a time when many fathers run away from their commitments, leave their spouse, their children, renege on child support payments and pursue their own dream or addiction, my father quietly kept his commitment to his wife and children.

And more. He was there for his nephews and nieces, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, his friends. He was there for the little things, like my baseball games, and the big things, like the Christmas he and my mother took in the grandchildren of their friends when these friends' son was dying of a brain tumor.

These small and large acts garnered no headlines. My father received no incentive money for keeping these basic commitments. He heard no applause, was not invited on any talk show.

> *The journey of faith requires taking one step at a time, moving through life one day at a time, obeying what you understand God to be telling you.*

My father's accolades came at his funeral, on Jan. 10, as his wife, his seven children and many of his 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren gathered to pay him their respects.

Sunflower pins: "Love is patient," says Paul (1 Corinthians 13:4). So was my father. He had his moments of angry outbursts, but overall he was patient. One way he showed this patience was in the woodworking he took up after he retired. He made many things, but none as numerous as the hundreds of wooden sunflower pins he cut out and gave away to family, friends and even strangers.

VISION: HEALING & HOPE

As the minister who officiated at Dad's funeral pointed out, to craft such pieces from wood you have to have a vision for what can come out of that wood. With the vision, however, you must have the patience, the fortitude, the commitment to keep working until that vision is made visible.

Hebrews reminds us that faith is seeing the invisible, living with "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Seeing what is possible can keep us going. Somehow my father saw possibilities in his family and stuck around as that family unfolded. He did some things right and some things wrong. But the main thing he did right was being there, through good times and hard times. I thank him for that.

The journey of faith requires taking one step at a time, moving through life one day at a time, obeying what you understand God to be telling you. If we are to live out the vision of being followers of Jesus Christ, growing as communities of grace, joy and peace and bringing God's healing, we will need not only to see and repeat that vision but live it, one day at a time. God calls us to be there—for our families, our communities, for our hurting world.
Gordon Houser

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THE
Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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Standing for peace

The first 10 years of Christian Peacemaker Teams

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Prologue

In spite of the many reports we've carried in the last 10 years about the activities of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), many may not know much about its work, how it began, what it does, why it does what it does.

CPT is a relatively small group of people, given all they have done in the past 10 years. They are Christians—most but not all of them Mennonite—who work and study hard and place themselves in difficult situations of conflict with the goal of bringing, or at least proclaiming, the peace of God. And, unlike the U.S. Marines, they do it all at very little cost.

In this issue you can get a glimpse of CPT's work. Read Carla Reimer's interview with Gene Stoltzfus (page 3), CPT's coordinator. Worth Weller reports from Chiapas, Mexico (page 6), where several CPT volunteers stood between the Mexican army and villagers.

Julie Hart, who traveled to Haiti last summer with a CPT delegation, analyzes that poor country's history and examines the roots of its oppression (page 8). Then she asks what the Lord requires of us.

Mark Frey (page 11) is a new CPT worker, soon to leave for Hebron, West Bank, which has been in the news lately.

We have a number of readers who are in prison and cannot afford to pay for their subscriptions. Our fund for prisoners is empty. I invite your gifts to help these people receive *The Mennonite*. On their behalf I thank you. *gh*

Next issue: Reports from Mennonite World Conference assembly in Calcutta

Cover: Photo by Worth Weller of Sara Reschly in Las Tacitas, Mexico

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The Mennonite is a member of Associated Church Press, Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse (a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group) and an associate member of Canadian Church Press.

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General Conference Mennonite Church

A cool presence in hot spots

Carla Reimer

A troop of 100,000 people who would be willing to serve in conflict-ridden hot spots around the globe. A troop of 100,000 men and women who would be willing to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, because they believed in the power of peacemaking. That was the dream Ron Sider articulated in a speech at the 1984 Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg, France, where he challenged members of the Historic Peace Churches to act on their convictions.

In its first 10 years, Christian Peacemaker Teams has kept alive the original vision of a faith-based, nonviolent alternative to deadly conflict around the world.

"Unless we ... are ready to start to die by the thousands in dramatic, vigorous new exploits for peace and justice, we should sadly confess that we really never meant what we said [about following Jesus' example] ... [since] making peace is as costly as waging war," said Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action.

At a December 1986 meeting, the Council of Moderators and Secretaries, which included representatives from the General Conference Mennonite Church, Brethren in Christ Church, Mennonite Church and Mennonite Brethren Church, responded with the formation of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). The Church of the Brethren participated in the meeting as observers and later became supporters.

The primary goal to offer "an organized nonviolent alternative to war and other forms of deadly conflict between groups" by providing "support to individuals and groups committed to faith-based nonviolent action in situations where violence is an immediate reality" captured the essence of Sider's original vision, says Gene Stoltzfus, Chicago, CPT coordinator since 1988.

Missile silo: Much of the first seven years of existence was spent raising awareness and building credibility through short-term projects, he says. Delegations participated in a variety of activities, from holding a peace vigil at a Minuteman II missile silo in North Dakota to serving as human rights observers during the Mohawk crisis in Quebec to traveling to Iraq several months prior to the outbreak of the Gulf War.

In December 1993, CPT sent out its first long-term team. Members spent a little over a year in Haiti during a time when many nongovernment organizations were leaving the country.

However, while CPT has succeeded in acting as a nonviolent presence in many violent places around the world, from the West Bank town of Hebron to a crack-infested neighborhood in Washington, to the breakaway republic of Chechnya, it has not gained the widespread support needed to sustain a troop of 100,000 peacemakers.

continued on next page

Marilyn Miller

Something to offer: *Christian Peacemaker Teams coordinator Gene Stoltzfus (left) with Louise and Bob Carlsten of Arvada, Colo.*

To date, there are eight full-time members, who are committed to three years of service, and 36 reservists, who are prepared to give between two weeks to two months annually for a three-year period.

Although the numbers are low, Gene argues that CPT is "on course" and in "a position of confidence" because it has moved from the vision to the reality.

The risky nature of CPT's work means that "it is something that needs to be built over time," he says, noting that the initial idea of sending out 100,000 peacemakers would probably have resulted in "massive insensitivity. We know from experience that when large numbers of people from Western countries enter volatile situations, it is hard to have healthy norms of cross-cultural communication."

Since CPT has gradually developed its corps of volunteers, he believes the organization is better prepared because the team members have the "competence and intuition for complicated crisis situations."

CPTers come from all walks of life, Gene says. They range in age from 23 to 70. Some have experience in peacemaking; others don't. "We are interested in people who have experience with life, who are as willing to sweep the floor as to speak at a press conference," he says, adding that CPT receives more inquiries from non-Mennonites than from Mennonites.

They also must be willing to place themselves in situations that many others have chosen to leave. For example, when President Aristide first failed to return to power in Haiti in 1993, CPT was present in the country at a time when there were few other nongovernment agencies around.

"The Organization of American States had sent 100 human rights observers to Haiti, but they pulled them out when the situation worsened. It was a terrible thing to do because the Haitians who had related to them were immediately vulnerable," Gene says.

"By contrast, CPT sends in teams and expects them to deal with issues as they come up," he says. "The local people see the difference in this kind of operation."

CPT is continually receiving invitations to field teams to new locations domestically and overseas. "The requests may be from a local mayor or a person who works at the United Nations or a missionary. They are built on our relationships with people and our reputation," Gene says.

All requests are processed by a committee that examines the following nine criteria before making a final decision about whether it is feasible to send a team to a new location:

1. Is the proposed action one our constituency can support? Is there a critical mass of supporters?
2. Is there a trusted, welcoming group with whom we can connect? Does CPT or one of its supporting denominations have experience and an established relationship of trust in the crisis setting?
3. Is the action explainable as Christian witness?
4. Can we talk freely and with integrity in our constituency about what we do?
5. Is there enough stability in the area that sending people is not negligent? Is it a situation in which there is time for love and nonviolent engagement to work?
6. Priority will be given to those locations where our governments are part of the problem.
7. Is the mission one for which we have people available who act nonviolently and bring hope to situations of stalemate?
8. Can provision be made for coping with language barriers?
9. The time frame of the mission should be clear for the benefit of staff, volunteers and the hosting body. Extensions can be made upon evaluation of the mission and sustainability, with special attention to team morale. The goals should be clearly articulated from the outset.

The end of the Cold War has had

Christian Peacemaker Teams has requests for 20 additional workers in current areas of involvement. While it takes only $12,000 a year to support a full-time CPTer, it takes $44,000 to support a U.S. soldier. Contributions can make a significant difference.

CPT encourages all congregations of 70 or more to consider naming a CPT representative who will travel on a short-term trip of just two weeks each year.

For more information contact Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680; (312) 455-1199; fax (312) 666-2677; e-mail cpt@igc.org. The CPT home page is at http://www.prairienet.org/cpt/

"Our vision is bigger than our billfold. We have a large number [of people] who are willing to pray, but they are not willing to give money."

Gene Stoltzfus

"enormous consequences" in terms of global politics, says Gene, noting that though the United States continues to be a major player, the United Nations now has a more prominent role, which allows for more multilateral efforts.

In addition, armed forces are now often asked to serve as peacekeepers. "The military is tremendously interested in conflict resolution. I am interested in seeing how CPT might be able to fit into this bigger picture by advising military about practical ways to be peacekeepers, while reminding them that we think their work would be more effective if they left their weapons behind," says Gene, who met with representatives from the U.S. military prior to the deployment of troops to Haiti and on other occasions.

While CPT has been recognized by many in the international community, including anonymous donations from U.S. State Department staff and a 1996 award from a United Nations subcommittee for its work in Hebron, Gene would like to see more involvement from the Historic Peace Churches that helped start the organization just over 10 years ago.

Of the original five supporting denominations, only three—the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Church and the Church of the Brethren—are actively a part of CPT. The Friends United Meeting joined in 1995.

CPT's annual budget in 1996 was $246,500. A total of 83 congregations and 561 individuals contributed funds to CPT in 1995 (1996 figures are not available). However, Gene is quick to point out, not all donations are monetary; many people give their time or items such as food.

Still, he hopes CPT will one day reach an annual budget of $500,000 in order to expand its work to include more locations and more volunteers. "Our vision is bigger than our billfold. We have a large number [of people] who are willing to pray, but they are not willing to give money," he says. "We have not done a good enough job of transforming support into dollars.

"CPT is at the center of the Anabaptist vision and faith. The Bible is full of [examples] of what we are doing. CPT is the only Mennonite-related institution that is seeking out, training and working with nonviolent direct action," he says.

Gene estimates that while about 50 percent of Mennonites "have a general residue of support" for peacemaking, only about 20 percent believe in radical, nonviolent direct action. "The community [of Mennonites] gravitates toward conflict resolution rather than nonviolent direct action," he says, adding that "our North American culture is more oriented to this way of making peace in our personal relationships.

"The longer I am with CPT, the more I realize that people need to believe that they have something to offer," he says. "Mennonites make good candidates for CPT, given their theological background. I have found that in crisis situations, even mild-mannered Mennonites can choose to take serious risks. There are specific gifts Mennonites can bring to the world. They need to just do it."

CPT photo

Just do it: *Christian Peacemaker Teams member Kathleen Kern (right) speaks with Palestinian friends in Hebron, West Bank.*

Struck by curiosity: *Carl Epp, left, talks with Mexican army officers.*

Between the army and the village

Worth H. Weller

A Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation stands with poor villagers being harassed by the Mexican army.

Christian Peacemaker Teams' first delegation to Chiapas, Mexico, turned out to be a full-fledged encounter with violence and injustice.

For 10 days this past November, six Americans and one Canadian were thrust into the midst of a conflict as old as Mexico itself.

On the one side are the indigenous people of Mayan descent, who eke out a living in the canyons of Chiapas, growing corn, beans and squash on communal plots throughout the jungle as they have for 1,000 years.

On the other are the ranchers, Mexican oil interests and international timber barons who covet their land.

Split into three groups, the CPTers were sent to remote villages where the Mexican army has been accused of being ruthless in their efforts to scourge the countryside of the Zapatista guerrilla fighters who have successfully focused world attention on the plight of their Mayan people.

Delegated as personal representatives of Bishop Samuel Ruiz, the president of the Catholic Human Rights Commission of Chiapas, the team members were given the task of acting as a buffer on behalf of the villagers against the military.

Bishop Ruiz' words were repeated to the CPTers at the commission's offices in San Cristobal de las Casas: "Because I have walked with the indigenous and have denounced with them the causes of poverty and the fundamental causes of this war, I am not neutral. We are not neutral because we accompany the indigenous communities that are being pressured by the army."

Duane Ediger and Marcia Stoesz, of Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas, were sent by taxi, bus and truck to Patihuitz, in the remote canyons south of San Cristobal. From there they had a two-hour hike in deep mud up the mountain to

"I was surprised to find I wasn't nearly as fearful as I thought I would be."

Carl Epp

Bateaton, a sustenance-level village of perhaps 20 families.

Robert Epp, from Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Neb., and Menno Klassen, from Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, went by bus and truck into Roberto Barrio, a much larger village on the outskirts of a large military base near the famous Mayan ruins of Palenque.

Horseback: Carl Epp, also from Bethesda Church, Sara Reschly, from Hesston (Kan.) College Mennonite Church, and myself, from the Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., used taxi, bus, truck, walking and horseback to complete a two-day journey to Las Tacitas, a village of 30 families just over the hill from a particularly aggressive military outpost.

Carl Epp's team had not been at their village 24 hours when they were called upon to fulfill their mission.

As four heavily armed soldiers and their officers appeared out of the jungle, Carl dashed to halt their approach. With them they had a young, indigenous girl they claimed they were taking to a nearby clinic to be treated for a hand injury.

Doubting there was any clinic in this remote area of the jungle and fearing a kidnapping, Carl detained them while some young men from the village joined the discussion. Eventually the soldiers grew uncomfortable as the CPT team took pictures of them, and they departed, leaving the girl behind.

"I was surprised to find I wasn't nearly as fearful as I thought I would be," Carl says after that experience. At age 77, he is a veteran of nine working visits to Latin America. But this was his first direct confrontation with the military.

"Frankly, I was struck by curiosity as to what the interaction was going to be like," he adds.

Sara Reschly's turn came the next day.

While Carl and I were away at the river bathing, three light infantry platoons marched past the village. Without hesitating, Sara, age 24, jumped into the line of soldiers and marched with them until they were across the river.

"I felt calm, because I had a goal, to keep them moving, to make sure they didn't stop."

Like Carl, Sara was surprised by her reaction to her first encounter with armed soldiers.

"I was stunned at the size of their guns, but I was struck too when I looked into their eyes and saw how young they were."

For Robert Epp, coordinator of the delegation, accompaniments such as what CPT provides are significant ways to live out the Mennonite faith. But beyond that, he says, such accompaniments also seem to work.

Worth Weller

Sense of calm: *"No picture," say Mexican soldiers to Carl Epp, right.*

"My hope is that the Mexican government will continue to hesitate, continue to negotiate, in the face of world opinion," says Robert, age 73.

His hope appears to be a sound one.

While Bishop Ruiz was moderating peace talks in San Cristobal, CPTers and other international volunteers were out in the countryside, acting as a brake on the military.

During their orientation at the Catholic Human Rights Commission, the CPTers learned that the commission maintains at any one time 45 to 50 "peace campers," spread among 26 communities in the cloud-strewn valleys of Chiapas. The program was developed when the military began establishing new fire-support bases in the remote areas to intimidate the villagers into abandoning their support of the Zapatistas, who are seeking a political mandate to force the Mexican government to obey its own constitution.

"The villagers had never seen modern soldiers before. They had never seen tanks. They were terrified, and in many cases abused," the CPTers were told.

Now, however, with the presence of the peace campers, a certain sense of calm has returned to the villages. The military is reluctant to directly engage villagers where peace campers are present, for fear of an international incident. It knows too that word of repressive acts will get out to the world community immediately, as peace campers rotate back to San Cristobal at frequent intervals.

"I'd like to think," says Robert, "that the presence of peacemakers such as ourselves in these villages will force the government to resolve the issues here without the scorched-earth policy that is so often used in these cases."

Worth Weller works for The News-Journal *in North Manchester, Ind.*

The call to act boldly

A look at the causes of poverty in Haiti and what Christian Peacemaker Teams is doing about it

Julie Hart

I have come to appreciate the simple pleasures of drinking fountains and flush toilets. During my trip to Haiti with Christian Peacemaker Teams last June I was reminded what a luxury running water is for most of the world's people.

Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Due to alarming infant mortality rates, life expectancy is 55 hungry years. Only half the people can read or write. Minimum wage is $2.25 a day, barely enough to feed a family and not enough to send children to school or pay for basic medical care. What is so alarming is that Haiti sits just 600 miles, an hour's flight, south of Miami. Surrounded by other prospering, formerly colonized Caribbean nations, Haiti is rich in natural resources. It has some 500 development or mission organizations attempting to help. What causes such poverty? And what does the Lord require of Christians in response?

History

Columbus' first stop in 1492 was Haiti. He laid eyes on a mountainous country, covered with lush tropical trees and watered by tumbling streams. Its yearly rainfall was precisely that required for growing sugar cane, coffee and a host of luscious tropical fruits not known in Europe. Interspersed among the low mountains were thousands of flat areas ideal for profitable plantations.

Columbus and his shipmates were met by the peaceful Arawak Indians, who lived as hunters and gatherers. In their abundant leisure time, they told stories, relaxed and enjoyed their children. The Europeans were appalled at their lack of a work ethic. While valleys lay uncultivated and streams shimmered with untapped gold, the indigenous Indians were satisfied to gather only what food they needed each day. The Spaniards and later the French felt obliged to utilize the island's natural resources more productively. They enslaved the native Arawaks and worked them as animals to till the soil. Unaccustomed to such harsh conditions and exposed to European diseases, the Arawaks died off within 50 years. The Spaniards then imported West Africans to labor on the plantations.

Around 1700, the country of Haiti boasted 30,000 white Europeans, 27,000 free mulattos (the offspring of white masters and their slaves) and nearly half a million black slaves. The slaves outnumbered their masters nearly 25 to one. Because the death rate among the overworked and underfed blacks was so appallingly high, most slaves lasted only seven years on Haitian soil. Thus the slave population required the annual replenishment of nearly 40,000 new Africans.

None of our traditional outreach efforts specifically addresses the root causes of hunger: political instability and corruption.

In 1791, a runaway slave and voodoo priest led a slave revolt. Blacks rose up against masters, burning their plantations and murdering white families. After nearly 12 years of fighting, the French withdrew, and Haiti became the first black republic in the New World. The economy in the process had been crippled, exports slashed and all signs of European development obliterated. Thus began 100 years of black African rulers, who, as one Haitian described to me, plundered and abused the people just as the French had. Fearful of another invasion from France, the limited government receipts were plowed into the army. And government receipts were limited due to corruption of the black elite, comprising less than 5 percent of the population. Modernization, social services, education and hope stagnated. During one 72-year cycle, 22 different leaders held the presidency, only one completing his term without a coup.

This period was followed by a 20-year American occupation, then nearly 30 years of rule by terror under "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son "Baby Doc." In 1996, the democratic movement begun by Jean-Bertrand Aristide 10 years earlier, and interrupted by a military coup, had a chance to take hold.

Root causes of poverty

1. Military spending. Excessive military spending leaves little for development. As one American con-

In the face of political unrest, corruption, violence and injustice, God requires us to act boldly, standing with the poor and oppressed in holding all people accountable for their actions.

sulate noted back in 1860, "The greatest bar to the industry and therefore to general progress of Haiti is her army ... the largest standing army in the world ... it supplies no national want. ... All their military appointments serve to stimulate factions among themselves, arm one against the other, destroy property and keep the people from their work." Excessive military spending characterized the nation until 1994, when Aristide replaced the military with a small police force as a condition for his return to Haiti.

2. Lack of education. Although attempts have been made, universal public education is absent in Haiti. Due to lack of funds, only 20 percent of Haitian children complete sixth grade, leaving half the population functionally illiterate. Democracies cannot stand without an educated and informed public. Poverty persists when citizens lack the education to participate in democratic decision making.

3. Reduced productivity. Increased productivity requires four factors we take for granted in North America but are absent in Haiti: (1) investment in new technologies, (2) improved education and skills of workers, (3) adequate infrastructure, such as roads and airports to distribute goods, and (4) a stable political climate. Due to the string of military coups, frequent constitutional changes, lack of schooling and lack of government investment in infrastructure and basic services, there has been little improvement in productivity.

4. Multinational corporations and lending institutions. In the name of maximizing profits for stockholders, multinationals do whatever it takes to keep wages low and discourage worker organizing. Profits desperately needed for investment in the developing nation are returned to the First-World owners. Multinationals emphasize products for export while local needs go unmet. To add to the struggle, international lending institutions, such as the World Bank, regularly insist on economic reforms that decrease state jobs and services to the poor before approving development loans.

5. Political instability. Due to the history of inept and corrupt governments, political instability has plagued Haiti. Political leaders sought office to improve private fortunes rather than develop the nation. There are few models for either true democratic elections or any type of balance of power among the three branches of government. With rigged elections, there has been no accountability to the people. The pattern of employing guerrilla groups to initiate the transfer of power has become ingrained. Due to this persistent political instability, those with the morals, education and skills to lead the nation have fled in fear of their lives during periods of government purges.

What does the Lord require of us?

Micah 6:6-8: The Lord requires us, not asks us, to act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

Traditionally Christians have responded to poverty and oppression on three fronts: development projects in agriculture, health and education; charity and missions. But these fail to address the root of the problem, which is political instability due to corrupt leaders who lack accountability to the people.

Ezekiel 40:1-13: God called Ezekiel to go and speak to the rebellious house of Israel. He was to warn the Israelites of their destruction because of their evil ways. God instructed Ezekiel to draw the city of Jerusalem on a clay tablet and then visually lay siege to it. He was symbolically to surround Jerusalem with army camps and battering rams. For 390 days he was instructed to lie on his side in front of the people to bear symbolically the people's sin and call them to repentance. Despite the risk to his life, Ezekiel acted boldly as God instructed and called the Israelites to repent or be destroyed.

Luke 19:45-48: Jesus responded boldly as he faced evil and injustice in God's temple courtyard. Finding corrupt money changers rather than religious pilgrims and worshipers in the temple courtyard, Jesus overturned their tables and drove their sacrificial animals out into the streets. Jesus admonished them, "My house will be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers."

In the face of political unrest, corruption, violence and injustice, God requires us to act boldly, standing with the poor and oppressed in holding all people accountable for their actions. Christian Peacemaker Teams is a faithful model of this call. CPT offers an organized nonviolent alternative to deadly conflict and oppression between groups. CPT provides skilled support to individuals and groups committed to faith-based, nonviolent action in situations where violence is an immediate reality or is supported by public policy.

CPTers are working in Chechnya, Bosnia, Hebron, Haiti, Mexico and Washington. Their public actions bring media and governmental attention to issues of injustice. CPT in Haiti accompanies labor and political leaders whose lives are threatened. They attend court cases where the judge has

CPT photo

The power of nonviolence: *J. Denny Weaver from Bluffton (Ohio) College discusses Christian Peacemaker Teams work in Cite Soley, the poorest area of Port au Prince.*

> ***"What those whites [CPTers] do is more important than all the money they say they are giving Haiti. What can we do with that money if we don't have justice?"***

a history of corruption and through their presence send the message that they are being watched and will be held accountable. They have monitored elections, assisted with land disputes and provided hope. CPTers plan public actions such as Ezekiel's to highlight unjust situations and attract media attention to stimulate serious discussion and change.

After 10 days of meetings with Haitian governmental and popular leaders, information gathering and prayer, our CPT team of eight North Americans stepped out with boldness. We marched through Port au Prince, the capital city, with a banner and symbolic boxes of documents. We called upon the U.S. government to return Haitian documents illegally obtained following the coup that sent President Aristide into exile. These documents contain names of Haitians responsible for the killing of nearly 5,000 peasant leaders during the recent coup. Our small effort and press statement drew coverage from the Associated Press, National Public Radio, Reuters and at least six Haitian radio stations. One peasant told our CPT coordinator following our action, "What those whites do is more important than all the money they say they are giving Haiti. What can we do with that money if we don't have justice?"

During the most recent coup in Haiti, when Aristide was exiled to the United States, CPT was one of the few international organizations that maintained a presence. Once Aristide returned, the native Haitian CPT coordinator walked out into the streets of Jeremie, where many popular leaders had fled to escape repression, to ask what CPT had done for the townspeople. One man responded, "They did nothing. They didn't give us money. They didn't feed us. They did nothing. But if they were not here, many of us would have been killed."

This type of prayerful nonviolent direct action, accompaniment of those in danger, a white presence in the courts, is unique to CPT. Development workers must maintain political neutrality or risk deportation. Missionaries desiring a long-term presence also must avoid political issues. Charity organizations come and go based on the most recent flood or drought. That is why CPT is needed. None of our traditional outreach efforts specifically addresses the root causes of hunger: political instability and corruption.

I dream of having thousands of CPTers in hot spots around the globe showing the power of nonviolence.

Pray for the leaders in Haiti, Israel, Russia and the United States who value violent responses to conflict over nonviolent. Pray that both we and they might have the boldness to act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

Julie Hart teaches sociology at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. In January she participated in three weeks of nonviolence training in Chicago for CPT's reserve Corps.

Prayer to act boldly

Julie Hart

God of Justice, we thank you for the wonderful blessings we take for granted: fresh drinking water, flush toilets, paved streets, a bed to sleep on and a safe community. In the face of injustice, give us the courage to act boldly in your name, to stand on the side of the poor and oppressed, to bring them the good news that because of your Son, the universe is indeed leaning toward justice. Guide our going out and our coming in. And finally, guide us in knowing how we might best respond to your requirements of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Refusing to play it safe

Mark Frey joined Christian Peacemaker Teams for a more radical form of service and to grow in his faith.

Carla Reimer

Mark Frey believes the Bible calls him to be a peace activist. Yet, as he participates in a training program to become a full-time member of Christian Peacemaker Teams, he admits he isn't always comfortable with the idea.

CPT sends teams of peacemakers to high-risk situations around the world. Full-time members are asked to serve on a volunteer basis for three years.

It took role-playing a number of different scenarios, including sharing a jail cell with hostile inmates, for the "fundamental activist nature" of CPT to hit home, says Mark, who is originally from North Newton, Kan.

"I hadn't thought through what it would mean to get arrested. It conjures up all sorts of emotional stuff like fear," he says.

Mark's boundaries were also pushed when he was among those who protested against violent toys at a Toys R Us store Jan. 1. "I tend to be someone who likes to operate within bounds of authority. It felt strange to march down a street banging on a drum. It's not something I normally do," he says.

MVS photo

'Not something I normally do': *Mark Frey, originally from North Newton, Kan., will leave Feb. 15 to serve with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron, West Bank.*

In spite of his reactions to what he terms as "hard-core activism," Mark refuses to play it safe. "I want a more radical form of service. I want to push myself to grow. I know this experience will change me," he says.

"Jesus was a reconciler, but he also actively engaged the powers. I have to ask myself, What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?" he says. "I may not always feel comfortable with testing this. ... But I feel like my faith will have a little more integrity."

He is impressed with the emphasis on worship and spirituality at the CPT training sessions. "It feels like I will have the opportunity to develop a closer relationship with God," says Mark. "It feels good to be around other people who are committed to these things"

His classes in Bible, religion and peacemaking at Bethel College, North Newton, and a stint as a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker at two peace organizations laid the ground-work for him to become involved with CPT, Mark says.

In addition, his immediate and extended family have offered emotional and financial support. His home congregation, Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., is covering his health insurance premium. "I won't be losing or gaining any money. It feels like a financially secure place. I also don't have any external commitments that would muddy the waters," he says.

"As a white, North American male, I haven't experienced persecution and discrimination," Mark says. "I recognize that I have it pretty easy living in North America. I want to connect with the people of the world."

Carla Reimer is news service editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Letters

CONTRARY OPINIONS

Thank you for the effort that goes into producing a semimonthly magazine. I realize that there will always be items that people look at differently, so I don't feel obliged to respond to every issue. However, the Dec. 10, 1996, issue contained several items that caught my interest:

"Contact the following addresses for more information about the new College Network (TCN) that organizers hope will 'give gay, lesbian and bisexual young people a forum in which to share stories and find support as they come out ... and give ... opportunities to support these young people'" (newsclip, page 18).

How is it that a small group of people who clearly contradict Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition, theology, doctrine, practice and governance still manage to get good press in *The Mennonite* month after month? Surely I could not be the first one to notice this or write a letter about it, yet are any contrary opinions ever printed?

Also, are we to understand that Darrell Fast (pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church and moderator of the General Conference Mennonite Church) agrees with the Jesus Seminar conclusions that the vast majority of the Gospel record is unreliable? "It would be a mistake to assume that the Gospels are simply a record of 'just the facts' about Jesus and history" ("The Christ of Faith in the Jesus of History," page 11).

The implication in this article is that the biblical record of Jesus' life contains a great deal more than the facts—that the Gospels include embellishments, clouded memories, wishful thinking, etc. If the article is to be taken at face value, Fast's position is clearly at odds with the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, particularly Article 4, Scripture. *Bob Cottrill, pastor, Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, Mission, B.C.*

Editor's note: *We print all letters that we receive for publication.*

DISTRESSED BY JESUS SEMINAR

May I suggest that you review the book *Jesus Under Fire*, edited by Michael Wilkins and J.P. Moreland. It is published by Zondervan. The eight chapters are written by eight different scholars.

After reading Darrell Fast's article, "The Christ of Faith in the Jesus of History" (Dec. 10 issue, page 10), the subject of the Jesus Seminar needs to be understood more fully.

Fast referred to John Dominic Crossan. Allow me to quote from *Jesus Under Fire*: "And Crossan is publicly heralding what he thinks: He denies the deity of Christ, declares that Jesus' pedigree—including his virgin birth in Bethlehem—is myth-making by the writers of the Gospels and concludes that the stories of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection were latter-day wishful thinking of the early church."

About a year ago I attended a librarians' conference where the main speaker spoke about the historical Jesus, and he said he was associated with the Jesus Seminar. His lecture disturbed me, yet I couldn't exactly pinpoint my distress. I spoke to him afterward concerning the subject of salvation. He was silent; he would not answer.

God provided a guest speaker at our church the following day. The man was one of the writers of one chapter in the book *Jesus Under Fire*. This man cleared my mind concerning the distress I felt the day before. He spoke about the Jesus Seminar people and what they believe and promote. *Viola Eden, Valleyford, Wash.*

ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC VIEWS

I am always grateful for thoughtfully expressed letters in *The Mennonite*. We certainly are a varied bunch, thank the Lord.

Imagine a widow with one child, a son, with a chronic mental illness. Her husband left her enough of a nest egg so that she could stay home with her son and invest her funds productively. Later, when the son has been through a series of mental institutions and finally landed in a group home, she's reached an age where it would be difficult to find a "normal job." She continues with her varied investments, and gives generously to her church and colleges and dozens of other worthy charities, as well as spending time in equally worthy volunteer work from time to time.

Further, the Lord we all worship has made sure this woman's professional training was always somehow in financial fields. Preparation for her and her son's future? Of course. That's how God works.

I thank God for people such as J.B. Miller and others who have helped me so much along the way, and for *The Mennonite*'s willingness to offer wisdom for all of our alternative economic views. *Metta Lieb, Newton, Kan.*

GRANNY DUMPING

The issue on "granny dumping" (Dec. 24, 1996) hit close to home. I was a visiting RN for 15 years and saw it happen too often myself. *Ann Bond, Glenside, Pa.*

ANOTHER RESOURCE ON RACISM

Thank you for your good issue on racism (Jan. 14).

I would like to add to the list of resources on racism a book I read recently, available in paperback: *I Dream a World* by Brian Lanker (Stewart Tabori & Chang, 1989). It is a collection of black and white photographs of dozens of outstanding black women who have contributed to American life in this century. Each photo is opposed by a page containing quotations by and information about the subject of the picture in a format like a coffee table book.

Women range from the famous to those known primarily in certain fields, e.g., education, fine arts, legislation, to the unknown, like the determined woman who provided a quality upbringing for children who needed a home.

The quotations also vary, from career descriptions and warm memories to heart-breaking experiences, poignant stories about growing up black in a racist society, and wisdom about hatred and prejudice. Alice Walker expresses what should be the aim of all people: "Every soul is to be cherished ... every flower is to bloom." *Esther Bohn Groves, North Newton, Kan.*

Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity.*

Six want to form CPT reserve in Boulder area

Boulder, Colo. (GCMC)—Dick Williams marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Mississippi in the 1960s and, during the McCarthy era, protested the firing of a fellow faculty member accused of communist sympathies. Gretchen Williams has volunteered with the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program and is part of a mediation team at her workplace.

Marilyn Miller has been arrested for her actions at the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant near Boulder, Colo., and for demonstrating against the Gulf War.

Bob and Louise Carlsten have transported items to El Salvador and Guatemala with the Pastors for Peace organization.

Brian Ladd wrote a letter to Nike explaining that he would not buy a pair of running shoes from the company unless Nike could guarantee fair working conditions in the countries that manufactured its products.

Faith in action: *Marilyn Miller (left) and Louise and Bob Carlsten make a sign to carry at the Christian Peacemaker Congress public witness in Washington in late December 1996. Miller, the Carlstens and three others want to form a CPT reserve corps in the Boulder, Colo., area.*

While each of these Boulder area residents has responded differently to the injustices around them, they all believe in an active approach to peacemaking.

As a result of their convictions, they have been talking about starting a local reserve corps for Christian Peacemaker Teams.

CPT, which was formed in 1986, sends teams of peacemakers to high-risk situations in North America and overseas. Individuals who sign up for the CPT reserve corps are asked to volunteer for two weeks to two months annually for a three-year period.

"This is a violent age we are living in. There is a great need for a nonviolent witness," says Bob Carlsten. "We often talk about peace and justice work in the church setting, but I find we are infrequently actually doing peace and justice work."

The Carlstens, who are from Arvada, Colo., added that since they are semi-retired and no longer have dependent children, they feel it is a good time for them to become involved with CPT.

"We have always had a commitment in our marriage to traveling to other countries because it builds awareness about what is going on in the world," says Louise Carlsten. "It costs time and money, but you can't put a value on it."

"The older I get, the more important I feel it is to act on what I believe," says Miller, noting that she is partially motivated by the death of her son, who died last year in a kayaking accident.

"Mike died doing something that he enjoyed. He was a risk taker. He was not afraid of death. I want to take on more of those characteristics," says his mother, who lives in Boulder and is the director of outreach ministries for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Her son's death has also helped Miller realize how much pain there is in the world. "So many people have died because of violence in our society," she says. "I saw the rows and rows of graves at Arlington National Cemetery. I thought how each of those graves stood for a wasted life and an enormous amount of grief for family members."

Ladd, a Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) worker in Boulder and a native of Calgary, Alta., sees CPT as an opportunity to follow the example of

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***Jubilee* tops survey of nine denominations / p. 17**

Activists debate use of blood at Pentagon / p. 18

The Seminary Sampler Open House at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary will be held March 2-3 at the Elkhart, Ind., campus. This is an opportunity for those interested in seminary study to attend classes and a chapel service, meet professors and students and get answers to questions about financial aid, housing and admissions. Lodging and meals are provided. To register, contact the AMBS admissions office at 1-800-964-2627; e-mail admissions@ambs.edu.

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Citing a need to bring the work of the church closer to congregations, U.S. and Canadian Mennonite Brethren are considering eliminating their binational church level and separating into two autonomous national conferences. Three models were developed at a September 1996 brainstorming meeting called by the executive council of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and presented for feedback to the wider church in November 1996 via the two official periodicals, *Christian Leader* (U.S.) and *Mennonite Brethren Herald* (Canada). The U.S. MB conference has 154 congregations with 20,524 members and the Canadian conference has 210 congregations with 30,191 members. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

Starting in 1997, Stewardship Sunday will be designated as the first Sunday of May (May 4 this year), rather than the first Sunday in November. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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When the Center for Victims of Torture was established in 1985 in Minneapolis, it was the first U.S. clinic and one of only three worldwide for rehabilitation of torture survivors. According to *Amnesty Action*, there are now more than 100 such clinics worldwide, including some in Chicago, Boston and New Jersey. The Minneapolis center has treated more than 500 clients and has a full-time staff of 30 professionals plus 185 volunteers. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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The Women's Concerns Committee of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario is sponsoring "Women's Work Fair-Fare" on March 1 at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. The conference, which will focus on Anabaptist women and vocation, will include discussion groups, celebration and a career exhibition. For information or to register, call (510) 745-8458.

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Chuck Neufeld, Mennonite singer-songwriter, pastor and on staff with Mennonite Voluntary Service, is on tour during February to support service activity in communities throughout North America. Neufeld is joined for the tour by his son Jon on guitar and harmony vocals. Remaining concert dates include Feb. 12, Waterloo, Ont.; Feb. 13, Kitchener, Ont.; Feb. 15, Windsor, Ont.; Feb. 16, Goshen, Ind.; Feb. 20-21, Rosthern and Regina, Sask.; Feb. 22-23, Calgary and Edmonton, Alta.; Feb. 26, Winkler, Man.; Feb. 28-March 1, Winnipeg. For more information, call (708) 339-6048, (708) 333-9827 or (708) 333-1358; e-mail 105007.2545@ compuserve.com.

Jesus, "who recognized that any kind of domination was violence."

His experiences in MVS and with the Boulder Mennonite Church have given him "a greater sense of God's goodness," which, in turn, has allowed him the strength to deal with the violence in himself as well as the larger society, he says.

All six people admit that they, in general, feel insulated from suffering because of their middle-class backgrounds. "The gospel was brought to the oppressed. It is seldom that many of us come into contact with the needs of the world," says Dick Williams, a semi-retired college professor from Broomfield, Colo. "We can choose to stay away from violence, while many in the world cannot."

"I want to relate to the poor and afflicted, but to go out and face them by myself is scary," says Gretchen Williams, a biofeedback therapist.

This group hopes to receive training for the CPT reserve corps this summer or fall. Others in the Boulder area also have expressed interest in joining the corps. Miller would like to see other peace churches taking the initiative to form local CPT reserve corps.

"At seminary, I learned the best way to grow is through conflict," she says. "Peacemaking is not about being calm. We have to do things to wake people up." *Carla Reimer*

Worship in the mother tongue

Commission on Overseas Mission Asia secretary Larry Kehler, left, joins in a worship service held in a home in the village of Na Som Boon, near Det Udom, Thailand. Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Skip and Carol Tobin are kneeling at right, and next to them are joint COM/EMM appointees Rad (kneeling, front) and Pat (directly behind her) Houmphan.

The Houmphans arrived in Thailand in late August with their two children. Pat grew up in neighboring Laos and lived in a refugee camp in Thailand before immigrating to Canada as a young man. "Because our target group is Lao-Thai, and their language is also our mother tongue, we were able to move into ministry quickly," he says.

A small group of believers is beginning to emerge among the Isaan people of northeast Thailand, where workers have served since 1990. Seven Mennonite workers, including the Tobins and Houmphans, currently live among the Isaan, pioneering a new method of evangelism: an eight-week, adapted Life Enrichment course originally designed for Thai secular Buddhists. Life Enrichment students who accept Christ are baptized and become members of the support group in their village, which meets each Sunday and is much like a house church.

The COM/EMM team works with support groups in Det Udom and Non Paeng, in addition to Na Som Boon. Once each month, the three groups gather for a joint celebration. *Carol L. Wert*

Colombian government closes Menno seminary

Washington—The Colombian government has moved to close the Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Santafe de Bogota because of its "Hacedores de Paz" (Peacemakers) program, which provides an alternative to military service for conscientious objectors.

No other options—short of violating the law and facing imprisonment—exist for conscientious objectors in Colombia, a country plagued by protracted civil war.

The attempted closing raises troubling questions about religious freedom, guaranteed by the Colombian constitution.

The Hacedores de Paz program takes advantage of a provision of a 1993 Colombian law that exempts youth enrolled in theological seminaries from military service. (Persistent efforts by Colombian Mennonites and others to secure legal recognition for conscientious objectors have failed thus far.)

The program has 70 participants, to whom it provides training in Anabaptist theology, nonviolence, human rights and ecology. Conflict over Hacedores de Paz began some three months ago, when the Colombian military refused to exempt the 70 youth in the program from military service, arguing the program does not meet the educational requirements established by law.

At the same time, the national police began investigating not only Hacedores de Paz but the Colombian Mennonite Church and its reconciliation program, Justapaz, as well.

The national police then recommended closure of the seminary.

Colombians close to the situation suspect the real motives for the attempted seminary shutdown are political, not legal. The Colombian Mennonite church, through its various programs, has succeeded in placing issues of conscientious objection and nonviolent conflict resolution on the national agenda, much to the chagrin of those who profit from Colombia's violent status quo.

Colombian Mennonites have appealed the closing and now await a final ruling from Colombia's courts. They request support for the Colombian Mennonite church and participants in Hacedores de Paz through letters and phone calls to Colombian government officials.

Appeals should be sent to Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe, Minister of the Interior, Carretera 8, No. 8-09, Piso 2, Santafe de Bogota, Colombia; phone/fax (571) 281-5884; and Ambassador Juan Carlos Esguerra, Colombian Embassy, 2118 LeRoy Place NW, Washington, DC 20008; (202) 387-8338; fax (202) 232-8643.

Send copies of correspondence to National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors, 1830 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. *Raymond J. Toney, a joint release of Mennonite Central Committee and the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors*

Mennonites provide shelter from B.C. storm

Vancouver—A few inches of snow can paralyze the Pacific Northwest. When winter storms dumped several feet on the lower mainland of British Columbia, including Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island, Dec. 28-29, 1996, it brought these areas to a standstill.

Winds of over 100km/hr (62 mph) whipped snow into whiteout conditions and wind chill brought temperatures down to minus 40 C/F. The storm forced the closure of Highway 1 from Langley to Hope and left hundreds stranded in their vehicles. More than 150 rescuers were involved in the effort to get people out of their vehicles to shelter.

Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church in Abbotsford was used to house more than 300 people. Delaine Milette, Abbotsford Emergency Services coordinator, said she was impressed with the flexibility of the church staff, with their willingness to allow use of the facilities.

Some stranded travelers ended up in private homes. Sumas Prairie farmers Carl and Christine Coers and Stan and Shirley Friesen opened their homes to more than 50 people each.

In an interview with the *Vancouver Sun*, Shirley Friesen said that it was "standing room only" in her house.

"It's lucky I keep a pretty full pantry," she says. She became concerned when the snow really started to come

Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia is contributing $30,000 for emergency relief in North Korea. The B.C. government's Council for International Cooperation Global Development Fund will provide an additional $15,000. A series of natural disasters has left the people of North Korea facing severe food shortages. Floods in 1995 and 1996 left the country's prime farmland devastated. Lack of fuel and fertilizer have made the little farming that can be done difficult at best. Food shipments will be targeted to arrive from March to October. North Korea should be able to sustain itself through the winter but the population is weak and low food rations are likely to cause further decline.

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The Mennonite Central Committee executive committee replaced the Ten Thousand Villages (formerly Self-Help Crafts) reference council with a binational board to oversee the program. The new board officially began work Dec. 12, 1996, in sessions held in Akron, Pa., at Ten Thousand Villages headquarters. The new board reports to the MCC executive committee. Ten Thousand Villages Canada, which oversees sales and marketing specifically in Canada, has a separate board that reports to MCC Canada. The board approved a budget for the fiscal year, based on an 8 percent growth in sales and mandated budget cuts in May if sales lag. The board also participated in a 50th anniversary event held Dec. 12 to celebrate the thousands of jobs created since Self-Help Crafts started in 1946. Board members, along with people who have been involved with Self-Help Crafts for more than 10 years, gathered for a meal prepared by staff of the Nav Jiwan International Tea Room, a part of the Ten Thousand Villages store in Ephrata, Pa. (*Larry Guengerich*)

down on Saturday night, Dec. 28. Many motorists took the back rural roads when the freeway closed, thinking it would be safer. In fact, it was worse.

"Finally, I started to flick my porch light off and on," Friesen says. "Nineteen people came the first night. When the search and rescue crew arrived the next morning, they found the rest of the motorists still in their cars."

The unexpected visitors spent the night sleeping where they could, and the next day a freight train took some of them to Central Heights Church in Abbotsford.

Even after the snowstorm that blanketed the lower mainland was over, the worst was still to come for some areas. The Fraser Canyon beyond Hope, B.C., was hit with avalanches caused by heavy, melting snow.

The Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia's Camp Squeah (Salish for "place of refuge"), which lies between Hope and Yale, lived up to its name for some stranded tourists. Eight elderly women, their driver and one other person were housed at Squeah after they were stranded in Hope.

Grace Baptist Church in Hope had been taking travelers into the church and letting them sleep on the floor but this was not appropriate accommodation for the women. Church members called Camp Squeah, and director Rudy Kehler offered them a place to stay in the camp lodge.

Maureen Kehler provided the group with most of their meals as well as books, puzzles and games to keep them occupied during their stay. After three days, the roads opened and the group was able to return to Calgary.
Angelika Dawson

Canada to West Bank via Zambia

Jerusalem (MCC)—In a part of the world known most widely for violent confrontations, at least 200 Palestinians and Israelis participated in conflict resolution seminars held recently in West Bank, organized in part by Mennonite Central Committee.

Carmen Pauls

Janet Schmidt of Winnipeg, now working with Mennonite Central Committee in Zambia, traveled to West Bank late last year to conduct workshops on conflict resolution. Here she works with Israeli and Palestinian youth in a cross-cultural workshop at Tantur Institute near Bethlehem. From left: Munjid (Palestinian), Noah (Israeli), Amal (Palestinian), Schmidt and Michael (Israeli).

Janet Schmidt, a mediation trainer from Winnipeg now working with MCC in Zambia, traveled to West Bank to lead nine days of mediation training, Nov. 29-Dec. 7, 1996. Wi'am Palestinian Center for Conflict Resolution in Bethlehem and the Jerusalem-based reconciliation group Musalaha sponsored the four afternoon workshops and two weekend seminars.

The Dec. 2 workshop brought Israeli and Palestinian youth together to focus on cross-cultural conflict resolution at a site carefully chosen to minimize personal risks to the participants. Borders between Israeli-controlled Jerusalem and West Bank are closed to Palestinians, so workshop planners decided to hold the seminar at Tantur, a nondenominational church institute on the border between Jerusalem and Bethlehem in West Bank.

Schmidt told the young people, "These steps lead to a sustainable peace: education of the less powerful people, confrontation between the two parties to equalize power, and then negotiation. Balanced power—moving to a point where both sides have equal power—is essential if negotiations are going to lead to a positive, long-term outcome."

"We are still in the confrontation stage," said one Palestinian.

"We are negotiating, and we have resolutions [the Oslo Accords], but the resolutions haven't been implemented," said another. "We are somewhere between confrontation and negotiation because power between the two sides is still unbalanced."

The Bongo Java coffee shop in Nashville, Tenn., is home to a cinnamon bun that resembles the face of Mother Teresa. A shop manager noticed the likeness Oct. 15, 1996, and the bun now sits enshrined on the coffee shop counter, having spawned T-shirts, prayer cards and bookmarks. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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On Dec. 20, 1996, Oland Kauffman of Fairview, Mich., passed a significant milestone in his four-month service assignment in Akron, Pa. With the last order he packed in the Ten Thousand Villages (formerly Self-Help Crafts) warehouse, he topped the $1 million U.S. mark in retail value of packages shipped. He kept a daily log of orders he packed and their retail values. To reach this total, Kauffman packed an average $12,000 U.S. worth of handicrafts each work day.

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Emmanuel Solis was 9 when Covenant Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man., signed a sponsorship to allow his family to leave Guatemala in 1986. Today the church is coordinating a fund-raising campaign for a judicial review of his impending deportation to the country he fled 11 years ago. Emmanuel, who celebrated his 20th birthday on Christmas Day, is serving a prison sentence for charges of breaking and entering. His family can't afford to cover the costs, estimated at $3,000, of a judicial review, without which he will be deported upon release from jail this month. Ana Spraggs of Winnipeg says her son's name was on the citizenship list when she and his eight siblings became Canadian citizens in 1993. Emmanuel didn't show up in citizenship court because he was in a juvenile detention center. He told a reporter recently, "There is nothing for me out there [in Guatemala]. I will be in a world of nothingness. I will be a person without a family—[who] is like a person without a soul." Contributions to the support fund can be sent to Covenant Mennonite Church, Box 29, Winkler, MB R6W 4A4. (*Gladys Terichow*)

Jubilee tops survey of nine denominations

Elgin, Ill.—In a telephone survey of nine denominations, the *Jubilee: God's Good News* children's Sunday school curriculum rated highest in customer satisfaction and emerged as a model for future curriculum planning.

Jubilee
GOD'S GOOD NEWS

The survey was conducted for a group of churches that is planning a curriculum to succeed *Bible Discovery* in 2001. Among the nine denominations surveyed were two that use *Jubilee*, the Mennonite Church (MC) and Church of the Brethren (COB). Other denominations that use *Jubilee* are the General Conference Mennonite Church, Brethren in Christ, Friends United Meeting and Mennonite Brethren.

In the survey, approximately equal numbers of contacts were made with each denomination, regardless of size. Of 1,322 randomly selected respondents, 166 were COB and 155 were MC.

Because two of the nine denominations surveyed use one curriculum, *Jubilee* held the greatest market share of any one denominational children's curriculum (15 percent of everyone surveyed). The MC showed usage of 61 percent and COB 58 percent. Only the United Methodists showed a higher percentage of usage for their curriculum (70 percent).

As a comparison, the various versions of David C. Cook, considered the primary competition for most denominational publishers, totaled 19 percent across all nine denominations.

Of the nine denominations, satisfaction was highest for the COB (8.33 out of a maximum possible ranking of 10) and the MC (8.27). Comparing curricula, satisfaction was highest for *Jubilee* (8.42) and for *Whole People of God* (8.35), both of which were significantly higher than all the other curricula mentioned. *Whole People of God* is a lectionary-based curriculum produced in Canada.

Churches that use *Jubilee* gave it high marks for the way the resources appeal to children, ease of preparation and hands-on activities.

Mennonites and Brethren were among four denominations that placed higher importance on choosing resources published by their own denomination.

The researchers who compiled the data concluded that publishers developing a new curriculum should explore the success of *Jubilee* and *Whole People of God*.

The researchers also recommended that summer resources be distinctly different in format and content, with broader grading and more active, hands-on programming. *Jubilee* is moving into its third year of special summer materials with these characteristics.

Other denominations involved in the survey were American Baptist, Church of God, Disciples of Christ, Moravians, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ and United Methodists. The survey was conducted by the research department of the United Methodist Publishing House and funded by a grant from the National Council of Churches. *Wendy McFadden*

WEST BANK *continued from page 16*

Zoughbi Zoughbi, director of Wi'am, said, "In this cross-cultural setting, Janet served as an objective third party, creating an environment of trust, confidence and freedom of expression.

"[Mediation and reconciliation are] new for many people here, although we have a deeply rooted tradition of conflict resolution," he said. "It is good to be exposed to different (Western) points of view. We can blend the positive points of the old and the new to come up with more effective ways to deal with conflict."

Schmidt also gave training workshops for people working in the field of nonviolence and conflict resolution, for the general public in the Bethlehem area and for volunteers and staff at the Wi'am Center, which was started in 1995 as a cooperative effort by MCC, World Vision Jerusalem and the Jerusalem-based Catholic Relief Services. *Carmen Pauls*

Youth With A Mission is spearheading a "reconciliation walk," following the route that the Crusades took through what is now Turkey, with the purpose of apologizing to Muslims for the atrocities committed 900 years ago in the name of Christ. About 60 walkers were welcomed warmly by the mayor of Istanbul on Oct. 22, 1996. Lynn Green, YWAM's Europe/Middle East director who is directing the walk, responded to the reception by noting that Muslims and Christians have common concerns: about negative aspects of Western culture, breakdown of families, the widening gap between rich and poor and the sometimes destructive output of the West's entertainment industry. The walk will continue as many hundreds of Christians, participating in small teams, make their way through Turkey in 1997 and 1998, to Jerusalem in July 1999, 900 years after that city fell to the First Crusade. (*COMmunicator*)

• • •

Members of the Religion Newswriters Association picked Cardinal Joseph Bernardin as the religious newsmaker of 1996. RNA also rated Bernardin's leadership as Catholic archbishop of Chicago and the public witness to his faith he gave while dying from cancer (Nov. 14, 1996) as the year's number two story in religion. The number one story was the arson attacks on churches, mostly in the South and a number of them African-American, and the nation's response to them. Other top stories in religion included the religious right, particularly the Christian Coalition, its impact on national and primary elections and growing opposition from other Evangelicals and mainline Protestants; the growing success of religious-based renewal movements such as Promise Keepers for men; the health problems of "aging icons" Mother Teresa, Billy Graham and Pope John Paul II, and escalating tensions between the ultra-orthodox and more secular Jews in Israel, along with the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

November U.S. election results in "Mennonite districts" largely mirrored nationwide trends: Democrats made some small gains and Republicans maintained their majority. A few congressional districts with large Mennonite populations changed the party in power: Democrats picked up the House seat in Iowa's third district (Kalona, Wayland) and in Oregon's fifth district (Albany, Salem), and Republicans won back South Dakota's lone House seat. Republicans continue to represent a majority of the rural congressional districts in which many Mennonites live. Likewise in the presidential race, Bob Dole won most of the rural "Mennonite counties" across the United States. Two sizable exceptions were eastern Pennsylvania's Bucks and Montgomery counties, home to many Mennonites, that recorded more votes for President Clinton. (*MCC Washington Office*)

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Mennonite Disaster Service has established a project office in Yuba City, Calif., and is seeking volunteers and funds to help clean up and repair flood-damaged homes. Early reports from areas north of Sacramento indicate 25,000 houses damaged; this number may triple as the situation unfolds. MDS volunteers are now helping shovel mud from houses, remove soggy furniture and tear out saturated carpets. Cleanup activity may take two months, with volunteers needed to do house repairs throughout the spring and summer. For more information, phone the MDS Yuba City office at (916) 671-5677. In addition to California, flooding has occurred in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Nevada. MDS investigators will visit affected areas in all five states, and it is likely that MDS response units will be established in other locations. Financial contributions to MDS, designated for "Western Floods," can be mailed to MDS, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501.

Activists debate use of blood at Pentagon

Newton, Kan.—Weeks after the Christian Peacemaker Congress, co-sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and New Call to Peacemaking in Washington Dec. 27-30, 1996, a lively discussion continued in cyberspace about a group witness that took place on the last day of the Congress.

David Hiebert, Scottdale, Pa., reported on MennoLink, the computer bulletin board service for Mennonite-related issues and topics, about an action by members of the Atlantic Life Community (ALC), a coalition of intentional Christian communities on the East Coast built around peacemaking and nonviolent action against war and violence. The ALC action coincided with CPT's public witness, held Dec. 30 at the Pentagon, against the "harvest of violence" perpetuated by the U.S. government's current spending on defense.

Three activists from ALC brought some of their blood and poured it on the columns at the Pentagon "to show people that the product of the Pentagon is destruction and violence," said Matthew Smucker, a 1996 graduate of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Smucker, 18, Jerry Berrigan, 21, and Christopher Jones, 22, were all arrested and charged with destruction of property.

Smucker said that he, Berrigan and Jones acted in the tradition of the Plowshares disarmament actions that began in 1980. That tradition says property that has been created solely for the purpose of destruction has no right to exist and must, in the biblically prophetic tradition of swords-into-plowshares, be transformed into something useful.

PENTAGON
BUILDING
RIVER ENTRANCE

Marilyn Miller

Life's blood: *Matthew Smucker, center in bandana, a member of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker community, Washington, was one of three young men arrested for pouring out their blood at the Pentagon in a Dec. 30, 1996, demonstration.*

"For me, as a CPT participant in the [witness at the Pentagon], using blood seemed revolting and disgusting: an extreme step I was not ready to take," Hiebert wrote. "Our culture trains us to be sanitary—blood is unsanitary. Some participants reported seeing a fear of disease in the eyes of the Pentagon guards. 'Who has the rubber gloves?' [the guards] asked as they prepared to make the arrests." Hiebert also called the action "creative" and "both political and religious."

Greg Walker Wilson of Washington was the main organizer of CPT's part of the public witness at the Pentagon. "I have both strong and mixed personal feelings about [pouring blood]," he wrote.

"Living in D.C., and having participated in several other actions of the ALC, I already knew that I felt uncomfortable with their standard trademark of pouring blood, [which they use] because it symbolizes the shedding of innocent blood that our government engages in and because it shows that the person pouring their own blood is willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of bringing Christ's peace."

He added, "I deeply respect ALC's undying commitment of resistance to our culture of institutionalized violence. I believe that the Plowshares actions have deeply moved, motivated and challenged many people (including me) to keep working hard at resisting evil in our world. I am truly glad that they exist. However, at times the symbol of nonviolent resistance—in this case, throwing blood—seems to cross over to become the very violence we are resisting against.

"I guess what was most disturbing to me about the particular action at the Pentagon was that the three young men who threw their blood enjoyed it so much. They struggled with the police (possibly initiated by the police's rough handling, but nonetheless returned ...). Once they had been handcuffed, they had great big smiles on their bloody faces (from spilling some of the blood, not because they were injured). It seemed that they had indeed passed the unspoken rite of initiation of being a 'radical peacemaker.'

"To me personally, and as expressed by the part of the Pentagon witness that CPT was responsible for, prayer and worship are more in keeping with the acts of resistance that I understand to be a part of my call to peacemaking."

Susan Mark Landis, Orrville, Ohio, added, "When I heard the guards reminding each other to get their gloves on, I realized that blood, in itself, can also be violent. Police officers are trained to fear blood and protect themselves against AIDS. I'm wondering if some of them saw the throwing of blood as a deadly act of violence against themselves.

"Blood, in itself, can also be violent."

Susan Mark Landis

"I sort of wish we had sprinkled flower petals or wheat seeds or something over our 'harvest of violence' to purify it and show that God can bring good out of violent and hopeless situations, if allowed to work in them."

She added, "Knowing how incredibly important it is to hold faithfulness above effectiveness, I still wondered, To whom were we witnessing, and what were we trying to say?

"How do we show them a type of love that causes them to say, 'Why are you taking time with me?' How do we invite them to stop killing themselves (as Paul did [in Acts 16] when the guard thought he had escaped jail during the earthquake)? What might have happened if we were dressed in our best business suits, instead of looking like people they already somewhat fear? And how dare I show up for a few hours from Ohio and ask them to change careers, when I am not willing to offer them financial or family or counseling support with such an incredibly hard decision?

"The head honchos in the building—did they even have an idea we were present? How could we get to them at all? I wonder what would happen if Mennos would flood the Pentagon with wishes for a new year of peace—say 100,000 cards and wishes for good will. That's one per Mennonite Church member and about three per Pentagon employee (or maybe we should use another random holy number).

"As we know, the Pentagon was graciously given more money than they even asked for in the last round of budget talks. Perhaps we should have been sitting in our congresspeople's offices. Were we wanting to talk to the people making decisions or the people carrying them out?"

Carl Meyer, Goshen, Ind., wrote, "I agree that the key issue in figuring out how I feel about the blood-pouring is the question of who we were witnessing to and why.

"Everything that was done at the Pentagon was nonviolent (depending on how you define violence). Was it all peaceful? 'Aggressive' has negative connotations for me. So does 'passive.' Where do we find our balance? How can we actively confront the evils of violence without seeing those same evils in our active confrontation?"

Joshua Yoder, Chicago, added, "No matter what your opinion about the witness, you have to admit it [got] people thinking and feeling. The e-mail discussion that has been raging testifies to the impact it made on people.

"Blood spattered on the Pentagon walls represents a supreme moment of truth."

Joshua Yoder

"For me, the blood-pouring was one of the most powerful symbolic actions I've been part of in my short time as a peace activist. I couldn't sing all the verses of 'Kum Bah Yah' because I had to restrain myself from crying (maybe I should have gone ahead and cried, but I was embarrassed).

"The 'violence' of the pushing on the steps, the shouting and struggling, and the blood made the moment what it was. I felt like I was watching all the violence the Pentagon building represents for our young men and women and for innocent and not so innocent people everywhere unfolding right in front of me while I sang at it and showed it my sign, which said, 'No to War, Yes to Jesus.'

"Blood splattered on the Pentagon walls represents a supreme moment of truth. I don't think we can reach that level of honesty by being nice and cheerful all the time." *Melanie A. Zuercher from MennoLink postings*

Peace Community Church Mennonite of Clovis, Calif., voted to dissolve Jan. 12, eight years after its first service. The congregation had had an average attendance of 12 adults since summer 1996. Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower and her husband, Duane, served as co-pastors of the congregation, which had an attendance of about 30 adults and 30 children at its peak.

• • •

Students at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., organized a 24-hour prayer vigil for Africa Nov. 12-13, 1996. The vigil began with stories. One student from Ethiopia recounted how the church had prayed for 15 years before revival swept the country. Another, whose family was caught up in the conflict in Liberia, told how they are still suffering hardships because of the war. Students who had worked in Somalia and central Africa also spoke. The vigil room included a list of suggestions of specific people and situations to pray for as well as maps, artifacts and photographs to help focus the prayers. Many who participated also fasted. (*Anita Janzen*)

• • •

Two Christian Peacemaker Teams members spoke on behalf of the children of Iraq during the confirmation hearing of Madeleine Albright as U.S. Secretary of State before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Jan. 8. Kathy Kelly, Chicago, and Jeff Heie, Washington, joined with four others to interrupt the hearing. They asked for an end to United Nations sanctions against Iraq, which have led to the deaths of an estimated half million Iraqi children under age 5 in the six years since the Gulf War. As former U. S. ambassador to the United Nations, Albright consistently voted to maintain punishing economic sanctions against the Iraqi people. Kelly and Heie spoke to the hearing before being escorted from the room. The story was carried in *USA Today*, the *Washington Post* and other major newspapers as well as on national news.

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Great Plains Seminary Education Program seeks a **director** to coordinate its graduate theological education program. This is a quarter-time position based in North Newton, Kan., to begin July 1. Great Plains is sponsored by Western District and South Central Mennonite conferences and works in conjunction with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The successful candidate will have broad experience in the work of the church; administrative and communication skills; a seminary degree; commitment to the Anabaptist faith; familiarity with academic procedures and a vision for advancing the Great Plains program. Job description is available on request. Salary is negotiable. Send resume and three references to **William R. Zuercher, P.O. Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117** by **March 1.**

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Reviews

FILMS

ONE BIG, HAPPY FAMILY

Secrets & Lies, *written and directed by Mike Leigh*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

There could scarcely have been a more stark way than the title of this movie to name what is at the heart of this and countless other family dysfunctions.

Cynthia Purley (Brenda Blethyn) is a barely middle-aged, white, working-class woman. Never married, she lives in a run-down London neighborhood with her angry daughter Roxanne (Claire Rushbrook), a street sweeper. Meanwhile a young black optometrist, Hortense Cumberbatch (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), whose adoptive mother has just died, is beginning the search for her birth mother. What happens when that woman turns out to be Cynthia (who gave her first child up for adoption without ever seeing her) is by turns hilarious and achingly painful to watch.

The climax of the film comes when Cynthia's brother Maurice (Timothy Spall), a successful portrait photographer, and his wife, Monica (Phyllis Logan), host a 21st birthday party for Roxanne. By this time, Cynthia and Hortense have become good friends—in Hortense, Cynthia finds the honest liking and affection she's starved for—but Hortense has never met any of the rest of the family. Cynthia invites Hortense to Roxanne's party, saying only that she's "one of my mates from work," and several glasses of wine later pours out the truth, with explosive results.

The film's title comes out of the mouth of Maurice, a large, soft man with sad eyes whose decency and humaneness surface in the often odd, humorous and invariably touching photo sessions he conducts. It becomes clear that the secrets the Purleys have kept and the lies that have resulted—from Cynthia's sexual past to the real reason for Monica's contempt for her sister-in-law—have produced the fruit of separation. The film's low-key ending, set in Cynthia's shabby but sunny backyard, leaves much hope for the future.

Newsweek

Odd couple: *Brenda Blethyn, left, and Marianne Jean-Baptiste*

The dialogue, particularly between Cynthia and Roxanne, is sometimes hard to understand. But Leigh has chosen actors with wonderfully expressive eyes and faces. He focuses the camera on them generously, so that the story is told as much through Cynthia's frequent, stormy tears, Roxanne's scowling eyebrows, Maurice's furrowed forehead and Hortense's mobile mouth as through the words themselves.

This is a movie about the redemption that results when people make the tough choice to be honest.

WHITE KNIGHT'S REVENGE

Ghosts of Mississippi, *written by Lewis Colick, produced by Frederick Zollo, Nicholas Paleologos, Rob Reiner and Andrew Scheinman, directed by Rob Reiner*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher

This is a white man's film.

Rob Reiner's white man is Bobby DeLaughter (Alec Baldwin), who in 1994 is assigned by the district attorney in Hinds County, Miss., to reopen the case of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

On the night of June 12, 1963, Evers was gunned down in his driveway in Jackson, Miss., and died in the arms of his wife, Myrlie (Whoopi Goldberg), and three young children. Self-acclaimed white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith (James Woods) of Greenwood, Miss., was charged with the crime. Two trials ended in hung juries (all-white, all-male). DeLaughter finds himself driven, perhaps by a burning desire to see justice done after all these years and perhaps by Southern white liberal guilt, to win the case, which means uncovering 30-year-old evidence.

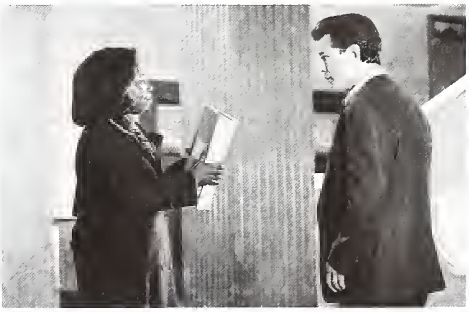
The Medgar Evers murder story is ugly, from the act itself to the bigotry spewing from Beckwith or dropping more subtly but no less surely off the tongues of Bobby DeLaughter's country-club parents and mother-in-law.

The story is also a less familiar one—few of us (non-Southern whites) had ever heard of Medgar Evers before the case was reopened in 1994—and as such deserves to be told.

But I found the telling to be, at times, unbalanced and simplistic. Bobby DeLaughter is portrayed as the white knight on his trusty steed (here, a Jeep Cherokee) riding out to exorcise the ghosts of Mississippi's racist past. He has developed (given his parents, we're not sure how) a conscience about race relations. And because his wife, Dixie (Virginia Madsen), has not grown along with her husband, they "stop loving" each other. Exit Dixie, whose portrayal I found most unfair, never to be seen again. Amazingly the DeLaughters' three children seem to get along just fine with only one parent— a father who's obsessed with his case.

Further, I missed any substantial treatment of the character of Myrlie Evers, a civil rights pioneer in her own right, whose persistence over 31 years was at the heart of the reopening of the murder case.

It is true that we need to see that sometimes justice does prevail, even decades later. But racism in this country is not limited to the Spanish-moss-hung back roads of the Deep South (one more fallen-down plantation and I'll scream). And it's up to far more than the occasional white lawyer to break the barriers that still exist.



Castle Rock Entertainment

Waiting for justice: *Whoopi Goldberg and Alec Baldwin*

BOOKS

SUFFERING WITH THE POOR

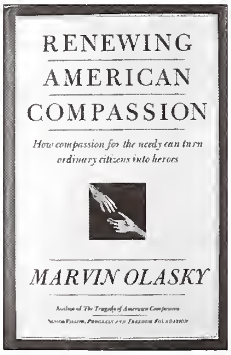
Renewing American Compassion: How Compassion for the Needy Can Turn Ordinary Citizens into Heroes *by Marvin Olasky (Free Press, 1996, 195 pages, $21 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Stefanie Jones, Newton, Kan.

As Christians we are called to show compassion for the poor. Often we do this through donations to charity and checks in the offering plate. Marvin Olasky reminds us of the true meaning of compassion—to "suffer with"—and challenges us to become personally involved with the poor.

He outlines a biblical and historical view of a more hard-line and effective welfare system than the one we know today. Several stringent principles taken from charitable groups of the 1800s serve as the backbone of his strict call to action, including placing primary responsibility for welfare on family, community and church members; providing more personal "one-to-one" contact with aid seekers, who are then accountable to those giving; individualizing aid to the specific needs of the recipient and requiring recipients to be employed (thus avoiding misuse of funds).

He further calls Christians to be more responsible in giving to charities, choosing those that cut welfare recipients loose and enable them to gain a new freedom by learning to function independently. To aid in discernment, he created a diagnostic tool in the form of a worksheet to be used in evaluating charities.



RENEWING AMERICAN COMPASSION

How compassion for the needy can turn ordinary citizens into heroes

MARVIN OLASKY

Throughout, Olasky provides anecdotes from small, successful nonprofit organizations across the country to show how many of the most effective organizations are able to operate on a shoestring, relying mostly on volunteer labor, in contrast with the high-priced, "innovative," professionally run government systems.

The combination of theory and story is a refreshing mix, making this work seem neither academic nor fluffy. The title and book flap, however, mislead the reader to expect more in-depth coverage of specific organizations.

Overall, Olasky's views are well thought out and thoroughly supported with biblical text. *Renewing American Compassion* contains motivating words for all Christians and would be particularly enlightening for those in social service careers.

DEEP ISSUES FOR MEN

What Are They Saying About Masculine Spirituality? *by David C. James (Paulist Press, 1996, 150 pages, $9.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Heinz Janzen, North Newton, Kan.

While well-funded, well-advertised male spirituality movements command the spotlight, other streams of masculine spirituality exist, with powerful influence. David James introduces us to one of these, a group of writers in pastoral care, Protestant and Catholic, including James Nelson, Richard Rohr and Sam Keen.

Not satisfied with cliches, these writers speak to the deepest issues of psychology and theology. James' summary and critique of their work is done in five chapters, beginning with "The Mythology of Masculine Spirituality" ("mythology" used in the technical sense of the deep-held beliefs of a group or person). James writes, "Contrary to much of the mythology of the ancient world, classic Christian theology teaches that God is neither male nor female, but fully both." Men need a good relation both to mother and father, and ultimately to express both feminine and masculine sides of their personalities.

"Images of God" is quite complex, dealing with theories of language and learning that pass by most of us. In "Soul Images of a Man," James says men need to explore their inner selves to see both strengths and shadows, and he works at a definition of "soul."

James also analyzes the myths of masculinity in recent literature, the best being *Iron John*, though most of this pastoral school discount the secular approach of Robert Bly.

"The Integration of Masculine Spirituality" again summarizes men's alienation from themselves and others. James looks at the causes of such brokenness and describes different approaches to healing.

In "The Community of Man," James talks about the need for healthy initiation rites into Christian manhood in contrast to examples such as joining a gang or making the football team. Finally, he asserts that most of the authors agree that a new breed of man

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is needed: prayerful, loving, just and committed to enter society boldly as a witness.

This is a useful resource for pastors and counselors, as it seeks to bridge the gap between spirituality and psychology.

Many men are seriously working at their inner and interpersonal problems. And by the grace of God and good upbringing, many men already are robust, joyful, loving and serving members of their church and community.

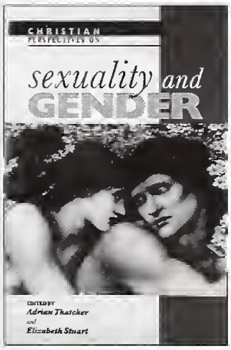
SEXUAL THEOLOGY

Christian Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender, *edited by Adrian Thatcher and Elizabeth Stuart (Eerdmans, 1996, 478 pages, $34 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Ruth Johnston, Elkhart, Ind.

This book contains a rich variety of articles by theologians, ethicists and biblical scholars addressing many issues related to sexuality and gender, e.g., power and relationships, marriage, spirituality, love, lesbians and gays, the body, violence, singleness and families.

The depth and length of articles also vary, as does the degree of reading difficulty—from those full of statistics and theological jargon to those accessible to most adult readers. The editors want to be "as inclusive as possible" in their selection of authors while admitting a lack of Third-World writers.



In the midst of this variety, however, are common threads. The editors included only essays from within the Christian tradition. They chose essays that demonstrate what they call "sexual theology" rather than a "theology of sexuality."

A "theology of (or about) sexuality" looks to Scripture and the broader Christian tradition to guide us regarding questions related to sexuality. A "sexual theology" uses human (sexual) experience to guide us regarding how we read and interpret Scripture and the broader tradition. The articles in this book represent "sexual theologies." They begin with human experience and move toward the tradition, seeking to discover how each can inform the other. The editors write, "The challenge posed by the authors gathered together in this book is to see the sexual in the spiritual and the spiritual in the sexual."

Though some people seriously interested in sexual theology may read this book cover to cover, perhaps its most practical use is as a resource book. Each chapter begins with a short section that includes a helpful summary of the essays that follow. Readers with particular areas of interest can easily dip into the most pertinent material.

This book is a rich and varied resource for laypeople, church leaders and Christian academics who want to read further about the complex and emotional issues surrounding sexuality, gender and the Christian tradition.

Resources

- **Restore to Us the Joy of Salvation** is the new packet of worship and spirituality resources for Lent/Holy Week/Easter 1997. Order from Commission on Education, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; (316) 283-5100, or from Resource Centre, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4; (204) 888-6781; price $10 U.S. or Cdn.
- **Conflict Mediation Across Cultures** by David W. Augsburger (Fortress, 1996, $22.99 U.S.) uses cultural anthropology, psychology and sociology to transform conflict.
- **Invisible Lines of Connection: Sacred Stories of the Ordinary** by Lawrence Kushner (Jewish Lights, 1996, $21.95 U.S. hardcover) shows ordinary moments such as shopping for bargain basement clothes to be "touchstones for the sacred."
- **What Is the Father Like?** by W. Phillip Keller (Bethany House, 1996, $8.99 U.S.) is a devotional look at how God cares for his children.
- **Children in Crisis: A New Commitment**, edited by Phyllis Kilbourn (MARC, 1996, $21.95 U.S.), helps Christians working with wounded children. The book addresses issues such as street children, child laborers, children with HIV/AIDS, sexually exploited children and more.
- **The Complete Guide to Bible Versions** by Philip W. Comfort (Tyndale House, 1996, $4.99 U.S.) compares all English versions and includes reviews of New Living Translation, Contemporary English Version and The Message.
- **Life's Living Toward Dying** by Vigen Guroian (Eerdmans, 1996, $12 U.S.) discusses our confusion over the meaning of death, giving a Christian alternative for the care of dying.
- **Faith and Work: A Congregational Study Guide on Worker Justice** by Regina Botterill considers ethical and religious implications of worker issues. Leader's kit (with leader's guide and video) is $15 U.S., participant study booklets $3; plus shipping. Available from the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, 1607 Howard St., Suite 218, Chicago, IL 60626.
- **If I Could Raise My Kids Again** by William Coleman (Bethany, 1996, $8.99 U.S.) gives insights on parenting.
- **Right of Passage: The Heroic Journey to Adulthood** by Nancy Geyer Christopher (Cornell Press, 1996, $15 U.S.) contends that youth service can provide the bridge from adolescence to adulthood.
- **Caesar's Coin Revisited: Christians and the Limits of Government**, edited by Michael Cromartie (Eerdmans, 1996, $16 U.S.), discusses the relationship of religion, ethics and public life.
- **In Search of the Unchurched: Why People Don't Join Your Congregation** by Alan C. Klaas (Alban, 1996, $18.85 ppd.) offers help for dealing with changes facing the church today.

Hesston College seeks applicants for the position of **director of campus facilities**. The facilities director leads and manages the maintenance and development of the campus physical plant. Responsibilities include administration of the maintenance department, supervision of personnel, budget management and coordination of projects in the Campus Master Plan. Qualifications include experience in facilities management and a minimum of two years college education. Full-time/12-month position beginning July 1. To apply, send cover letter, resume and three references to **Nelson Kilmer, Director of Finance, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; (316) 327-8217**; fax (316) 327-8300; e-mail **NelsonK@hesston.edu**.

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Editorial

Making some noise

The quiet in the land have learned to make some noise. That noise is a cry for justice. And it's time we all joined in making that cry a chorus, one that echoes the cry of the Psalmist: "Do not let the downtrodden be put to shame; let the poor and needy praise your name" (Psalm 74:21).

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) formed just over 10 years ago in response to a leading of the Spirit to stand with the downtrodden and be a voice for justice. It is a call we all should heed in whatever ways we can—in our homes, in our work, in our worship, in our congregational life.

It's not always easy to discern just how to stand with the poor and be a voice for justice. But CPT is a concrete way we can all share in that call. Such a call can become only a cliche, an empty ideal. Living it out requires hard work, sharp thinking, money, courage, many prayers and much grace.

> *We are all called to make our voice heard for justice in a world groaning under the weight of evil.*

The people involved with CPT have wedded practicality and idealism. Rather than dream about what can be done in different situations to bring justice, they have gone into those situations with their eyes open. They have made mistakes, but they have learned as they have acted. They do their homework ahead of time, but they have sat at the feet of the great teacher, experience.

Gandhi called his movement an experiment in peacemaking. As in most fields of endeavor, you can only do so much preparation, then you must act. You learn from each experiment, then use that knowledge to act again. Gandhi called his way of life and action "satyagraha," a combination of Sanskrit words for "truth" and "force." At the heart of his nonviolence, he said, was truthtelling.

Truthtelling is also at the heart of CPT's work. The powers in this world, which want to maintain control over people in order to amass wealth, depend on keeping the truth from seeing the light of day. Part of CPT's commitment is being on the scene with the people who are being oppressed and making that oppression known to the wider world.

Julie Hart (see pages 8-10) points out the roots of oppression: the hoarding of wealth by the few so that the majority of people have no access to basic needs. Simply pouring food into a country with such an inequitable distribution of wealth is doomed to failure and may even help support the injustice of a regime.

CPT is not the only approach, but it is an important one. It is an attempt to speak to the sources of injustice. In this it follows the way of Jesus, who "attacked the root of the problem—the evil which often laces human intentions and institutions," writes Donald Kraybill in *The Upside-Down Kingdom*. "[Jesus] called for repentance. He pleaded for love. He announced that only God should be worshiped."

In my contacts with people in CPT, three things have impressed me. One is **their commitment to prayer**, to reading Scripture, to seeking the Spirit's leading each day for whatever they do.

Two, **their preparation**. They study the situation they are to enter, its politics, its customs, the various groups involved in conflict and what motivates them. They can always do more, but they do not enter a conflict naively.

Third, **their humor**. When I was with Kathleen Kern and Wendy Lehman in the West Bank in 1995, we talked about the situation in Hebron, but we also laughed about many things. And you can't be around CPT coordinator Gene Stoltzfus too long without realizing he doesn't take himself too seriously.

For many reasons—other commitments, poor health, lack of money or courage—we cannot all be on the field with CPT. Yet we can support its work in other ways. First, we can pray. Such work depends on prayer more than anything. We can also give money, which CPT needs for its work. Each of our congregations should consider appointing someone to be in contact with CPT and perhaps go on a short-term assignment and report back.

Whatever we do, we are all called to make our voice heard for justice in a world groaning under the weight of evil. If we cry out together, that voice can be beautiful, harmonious and just. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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FEBRUARY 25, 1997

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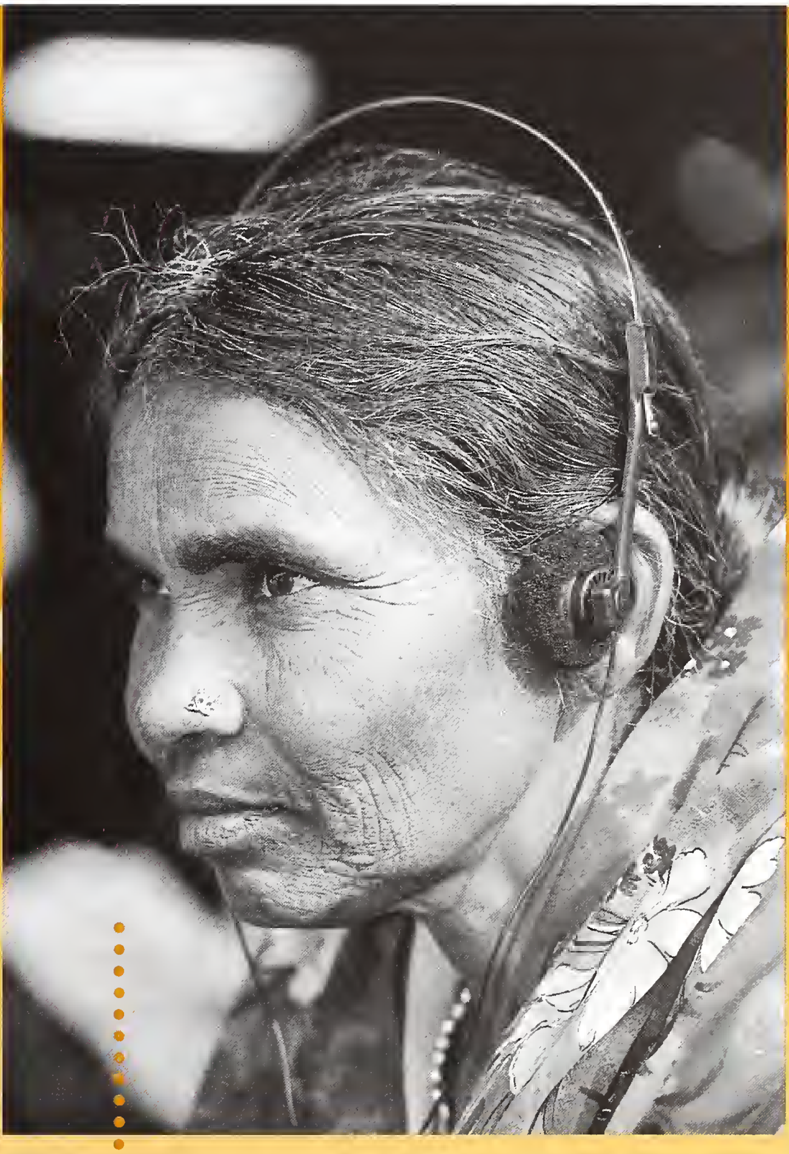

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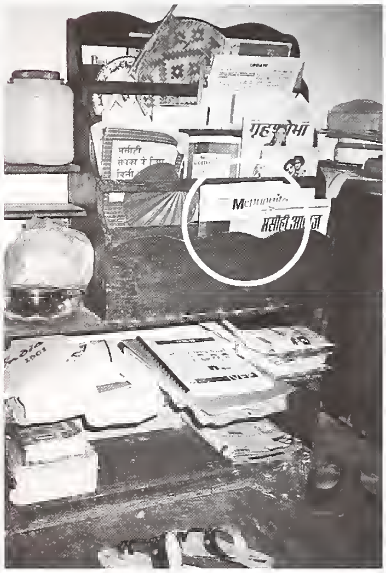
Hear what the Spirit is saying

The 13th assembly of Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta, India

Prologue

In this issue we have devoted more pages than usual to our feature. Every six years or so the Mennonite World Conference holds an assembly. This most recent event was the first to be held in Asia, and by all appearances it was a huge success.

Three members of Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors, attended the assembly and visited other areas of India where Mennonites are working. In spite of using extra pages, we are only bringing you a portion of what they reported.



We're also grateful to Jon Warren, a professional photographer who attended the assembly and took hundreds of excellent photos. Again, we are only able to offer a small selection of his photos.

At left is a photo taken by Susan Jantzen, coordinator of Women in Mission, who noticed a copy of *The Mennonite* in a home in India. This reminds me that our fund—to help people overseas (a number of them in India) receive our magazine who cannot otherwise afford it—is depleted. We ask your help in making this available to our brothers and sisters overseas. Thank you. *gh*

Next issue: City on a hill—Denver

Cover: Photo by Jon Warren

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General
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Mennonite
Church

The stories and photos on pages 3-15 have been provided by Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group. The writers, all members of Meetinghouse, are Paul Schrag, editor of Mennonite Weekly Review, *J. Lorne Peachey, editor of* Gospel Herald, *and Don Ratzlaff, editor of* The Christian Leader. *Jon Warren is a free-lance photographer from Seattle.*

'Together in heaven'

Mennonites saw a true picture of their worldwide family—one with more brown faces than white—as India 1997, the 13th Mennonite World Conference assembly, opened Jan. 6 in Calcutta.

Nearly 4,500 people from 66 countries were registered for the conference, which continued through Jan. 12.

Gathered under a huge tent, known as a "shamiana," participants at the opening worship service heard a call for unity from MWC president Raul Garcia of Argentina. "We are looking forward to being together in heaven," he said. "Why can't we move a little closer to each other now? Moving a little closer will require being more accountable to each other and more responsible to each other, more solidarity, becoming more interdependent, more Christlike. May God help us reach that goal in the third millennium."

The assembly was held on the grounds of St. Thomas School amid the noisy, chaotic streets of a city of 12 million. The winter weather was warm and pleasant, ideal for the assembly's outdoor activities.

Each day's program focused on a different continent, beginning Jan. 7 with Europe. The assembly's theme was "Hear What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches." *Paul Schrag*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches

Attendance

North America: 950
Asia (outside India): 200
Europe: 200
Latin America: 95
Africa: 75
Non-Indian total: 1,520
India: 3,000
Total: 4,520

4,472 registrants from 66 countries

Countries with the most registrants:
India: 2,942
United States: 650
Canada: 291
France: 55
Germany/Netherlands: 50 each
Japan: 44
Countries with fewest registrants: -
Austria, Costa Rica, Cuba, Fiji Islands, Israel, Italy, Laos, Lebanon, Malawi, Nigeria, Russia, Trinidad—1 each

Under the 'shamiana'

"We are enjoying the close friendship. I'm very happy with this."
M.S. John of Boothpur, India

Within the walls of the St. Thomas School yard, the clatter of crowded streets faded to a murmur. If you listened closely, you could hear the Spirit speak.

You might have heard it in the sermons on "Hear What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches." You might have heard it in the fellowship while drinking sweet, milky tea with believers from around the world. It didn't matter whether you heard it in Hindi, English or some other language.

What mattered for 4,500 Mennonites—including 3,000 Indians—Jan. 6-12 was that Christ united believers in a divided world.

"Before, we were segregated," said Jogesh Kumar Asna of Raipur, India. "Now we have come together, and we are one."

M.S. John of Boothpur, India, a young man who wants to be a pastor, said, "We are enjoying the close friendship. I'm very happy with this."

People from around the world echoed that sentiment. "The people here are so sweet," said Miwako Furuta, a young woman from Kobe, Japan. "I feel very comfortable."

About the only reason for discomfort was Calcutta's polluted air, which caused the worship services to be accompanied by a chorus of coughing.

Certainly, no one could complain about the warm weather, ideal for a conference held mostly outdoors. Worship services every morning and evening took place under a huge tent, known as a "shamiana," about the size of two football fields, decorated in purple and pink. Meals were served under another shamiana.

Music and drama: Also on the school grounds, the Global Church Village featured displays from each continent. The displays surrounded a central stage, where music and drama groups performed each afternoon.

The only activities people had to go inside for were seminars, held in a classroom building, and meetings of the General Council, Peace Council and Faith and Life Council, held in a church on the campus.

Many people spent part of their afternoons touring the city. Sixteen tours were offered each day. The ones featuring the work of Mennonite Central Committee and Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity sold out almost immediately.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches

This 13th world conference didn't happen in only one city. The week in Calcutta, called Assembly Gathered, was preceded and followed by Assembly Scattered.

For that part of the conference, people spent three days in one of about 10 cites throughout India as well as Nepal and Bangladesh. They visited Mennonite congregations and places of mission and service work.

As the conference ended, MWC leaders expressed satisfaction with how well the assembly went. "It's gone far better than my fondest dreams," said Vern Preheim, an executive committee member from Newton, Kan.

But one goal not fully achieved was helping people from different parts of the world give and receive counsel, said MWC executive secretary Larry Miller. "We needed something in the structure to help people talk with each other cross-culturally," he said.

The conference was a cause for excitement and satisfaction in the 85,000-member Indian Mennonite church. It was also a learning experience, especially for those who came from small villages, said executive committee member P.B. Arnold.

"When they come here and find that Mennonites come from all over the world, that is surprising for them," he said. "We are greatly honored by the presence of the world body here."
Paul Schrag

Europe Day: *the need for vision*

The migration of 25,000 Mennonites from Russia to Germany over the past 25 years has resulted in a less-than-happy reunion.

The immigrants, known as "Aussiedler," and the established German Mennonites mostly worship in separate congregations because of their cultural differences.

"It is more a time of separation than of being together," said Liesa Unger of Karlsruhe, Germany. "If they can't find a way of living together, it is better that they are separate and have peace with each other and worship as they want to."

Unger, who works with the German Mennonite voluntary service organization Christliche Dienst, led a seminar on "Mennonite Migrations from Russia to the West" during Europe Day, Jan. 7, at Mennonite World Conference.

The differences that separate the Aussiedler from the established German Mennonites are the result of the Russian Mennonites' years of cultural isolation in the Soviet Union, Unger said.

"They think the culture they have in church is the German culture," she said. "Then they come to German churches and see women in jeans and short hair and earrings, and they say, 'These are not Christians.'"

Because the Aussiedler consider the established German churches worldly, they have started their own congregations. There are now about 100 Aussiedler churches in Germany. These make up more than half the German Mennonite population.

In addition to the 25,000 Aussiedler, about 120,000 people of ethnic Mennonite background who now belong to other churches also have migrated. In all, about 1.5 million Germans from Russia have come back to Germany since the early 1970s.

The migration began when the Soviet government began allowing Germans in Russia to move to Germany if they had close relatives there. Some families had to wait 10 to 15 years for permission to move. Others, like Unger's family, got to leave quickly. The family migrated in 1973, when Unger was 10. "This was something we had waited for," she said. "It was like the Holy Land."

In all, about 1.5 million Germans from Russia have come back to Germany since the early 1970s.

In the late 1980s Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev began allowing Germans to move even if they did not have close relatives in Germany. This led to a flood of immigration and the decline of Russian Mennonite churches.

The cultural differences that divide German Mennonites today also cause tension between older and younger generations in the Aussiedler churches. Unger told of a 30-year-old Aussiedler woman whose congregation's elders came to her house and reprimanded her for wearing a skirt they considered too short.

"I know God loves me anyway," the woman said. "Do you really?" an elder replied.

It is unfortunate, Unger said, that Aussiedler young women "are made to feel they are turning away from the church because they are cutting their hair or wearing jeans. ... Many are driven away from the church to a secular life."

Europe Day's theme was "Without Vision, the People Perish." Introducing the day, Ed van Straten of the Netherlands spoke of the need to revitalize European churches. "We see that our numbers are declining, our spiritual lives are getting tired," he said. "Our testimony is weak, our voice is not heard. For many, the church is only a marginal presence in their lives.

"We in Europe need vision, and we turn to you [Mennonites around the world] to help us rediscover it." *Paul Schrag*

North America Day: *hear and heed*

Parent for much of the international Mennonite family, North America led Wednesday's sessions as a partner among equals. "God used North America as a springboard," India's J.P. Masih noted in his introduction. On behalf of his compatriots, he characterized the early missionaries as "great champions who left everything to be in our midst."

The day's three plenary sessions, meanwhile, acknowledged the new international partnership. They also demonstrated the new diversity of the North America scene, where churches worship on any given Sunday in more than 40 languages. Worshipers at Calcutta were welcomed in five of these languages: English, Spanish, German, Cheyenne and French.

The keynote speakers applied the day's theme, "Hear and Heed the Living One," as a universal word to the churches.

Patricia Shelly, a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer from Kansas, noted in the morning session that hearing the Word of God and then doing it is not always the sequence of faithfulness. Sometimes doing must precede hearing.

"Isaiah says carrying out the agenda of God enables us to hear the voice of God," she said. She pled for a worldwide church that would love the poor and oppressed as Jesus did.

Larry Martens, a pastor and educator from California, said the exhortations of Christ to the seven churches of Revelation apply to the contemporary worldwide church. Some churches face specific pressures more directly than others, but the struggle with materialism, moral compromise, lack of love, doctrinal impurity, divided loyalties, persecution and discouragement know no boundaries. "But in Christ, there is hope for the unfaithful church," he said.

Stanley Green, president of Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind., addressed international relationships more directly. He said the challenge of Mennonite World Conference in the coming years is to imagine and create a structure that gives equal voice to all national churches, not simply those "with the longest history or most resources."

Green also warned of the "privatism of faith" that has taken root in the individualistic culture of the West and is spreading to other corners of the world. "If the temptation to power was a problem for first-century Christians, then the challenge of privatism is a danger for Anabaptists in the 20th century," he said.

The programs were spiced with touches of creative expressions, including the story of Dexter, a homeless man who took up residence in the church of storyteller Jonathan Larson in Atlanta, a concert of prayer led by Warren Hoffman and Michelle Mann, and a liturgical dance. *Don Ratzlaff*

> ***"If the temptation to power was a problem for first-century Christians, then the challenge of privatism is a danger for Anabaptists in the 20th century."***
>
> **Stanley Green**

Hear What
iving Ch

Jon Warren

Tremendous odds: *The Indonesian Cultural Team performs on Asia Day.*

Asia Day: *amid many religions*

What does it mean to live as Christians in the midst of many different religions? This was the question of Asia Day, Jan. 9, at Mennonite World Conference, planned and directed by delegates from Mennonite churches in Asia.

"If Anabaptism started in Europe and spread through North America, it is in Asia that Anabaptism has been established," said India's J.P. Masih in introducing the day.

Through sermons, in seminars and with testimonies, speaker after speaker said this establishing is being done at tremendous odds. In all of Asia, Christians represent a small percentage of the total population. And Anabaptists are only a small percentage of the Christian church on this continent.

The result? "We are a minority religion," said Stephen Gonsalves of India in a workshop. "But that shouldn't discourage us," he continued. "Jesus himself was a minority."

Gonsalves warned, however, that the sense of being a minority can also be negative. "We can come to feel we are a minority spiritually," he said.

But that's not the case. In India, for example, Christians are known today for operating some of the best hospitals and schools in the country. Many of these were established by missionaries, "for which we can be thankful," said Soman Das in another seminar, "Contributions of Christian Mission in India."

But this has also brought problems for the Christians of India. "Many Hindus and Muslims in our country look at Christians as stooges for the West," Das said.

This perception—and the fact that the church has received much of its support from abroad in the past—has also created a sense of dependency in the Asian church, Das said.

Theologically speaking, this dependency "is wrong," said Indonesia's Mesach Krisetya in a morning Bible study. It is wrong for people of Asia, who come to believe that "what is coming from the West is right and what is local is never considered worthy."

It is also wrong for the "independents," who come to see success in terms of individual achievement and who "are not really aware that they need other people to accomplish something," Krisetya said.

He called for an interdependency of Anabaptists from all continents of the world. Instead of country-to-country or business-to-business, both of which have characterized relationships in the past, Krisetya called for people-to-people encounters. "This is still nonexistent," he said. "The real church is international."

> ***"The real church is international."***
>
> **Mesach Krisetya**

Krisetya also said that for many Anabaptists in Asia today, "To be Christian means to take the risk of being alienated from their own people. They become strangers in their own land." For this reason they need contacts with Anabaptists in other continents.

Indeed, the "principalities continue to try to put the church out of business," said Pronoy Sarkar of India in a sermon in the morning service. But, he noted, "no political machine, no self-appointed man can stand in the way of Christ and his church."

How all this works out in various settings was illustrated by testimonies in the evening service. Participants heard stories of Anabaptists at work in Singapore, the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, Nepal and Taiwan.

Also featured in the evening service was singing and dancing by the colorfully costumed Indonesia Cultural Team led by Andreas Christanday.

The Asia Day theme, "Living Christ Amid Many Religions," was also developed in numerous seminars, ranging from "Applying the Anabaptist Peace Stance in the Indian Context" to "The Indonesia Mennonite Church Resists Nuclear Power Construction" to "Women's Empowerment: the Joys and Struggles Associated with It." *J. Lorne Peachey*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches

"In Africa, the problem is not preaching the Word; the problem is holiness."

Enoch Shamapani

• •

Africa Day
Christ's unshakable kingdom

"It is interesting to note that Africa is known as a 'dark' continent when it enjoys so much sunshine," mused Joram Mbeba of Tanzania as he introduced the Africa Day emphasis on Jan. 10.

Mbeba may have been referring mostly to weather conditions when he said it, but the African delegation brightened the week's programming with a blaze of enthusiasm, joy and insight.

Shining brightest of all was the rhythm and spirit of Essengo, the 11-member choir from Zaire. Prior to Friday, the group had attracted growing crowds at daily performances on the center stage of the Global Village Church.

On this day, their singing and movement energized an entire delegation, leaving some, by day's end, literally dancing in the aisles.

But Africa, a volatile continent with a dynamic church, contributed more than music. During seminar sessions, Bedru Hussein of Ethiopia explained to a roomful of captivated Caucasians how the Miserete Kristos Church grew from 5,000 members when it was forced by a Marxist regime to go underground in 1982, to 50,000 members when it re-emerged 10 years later. Today, membership is 104,000.

In another seminar, Nzash Lumeya of Zaire pled passionately for keeping evangelism and social ministries together. In his country, caught in the grip of political oppression, social unrest and disease, the church has experienced significant growth and impact.

Both men served as plenary speakers, addressing the day's theme, "Christ the Same, Yesterday, Today and Forever."

In his morning message, Hussein warned listeners not to depend on human institutions and endeavors because, as an old African saying goes, "This too shall pass away."

"Eventually, the world that we live in will crumble and only God's kingdom will last," Hussein said. "Those who follow Christ are part of this unshakable kingdom, and they will withstand the shaking, sifting and burning."

Lumeya, in his midmorning Bible study, called for increased cooperation among local churches, nations and Mennonite groups, especially in the face of pressing human need.

"The problem we are facing is the problem of division," he said. "Can Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ work together in Africa? Can we take the risk of putting our resources together?"

During the climactic evening service, Enoch Shamapani of Zambia challenged Mennonites to personal holiness. "In Africa, the problem is not preaching the Word; the problem is holiness," he said. "When we say Jesus, 'yesterday, today and forever,' we must also walk the way Jesus walked."

The African delegation capped the evening with a group chorus, followed by a post-adjournment miniconcert by Essengo. A remnant of 100 or so delegates of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities moved with uninhibited joy and celebration as the day drew to a close. *Don Ratzlaff*

Only God's kingdom will last: *Essengo, a Zairian Mennonite Brethren choir, performs.*

Jon Warren

Latin America Day: God's unstoppable Spirit

The land of Latin America is a symbol of God's power and assurance of victory of the Anabaptists' faith, even among impossible circumstances," said India's J.P. Masih in introducing Latin America Day, Jan. 11, at Mennonite World Conference.

How is this happening on a continent of violence, death, destruction and oppression? Through Christian resistance, said Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, Lancaster, Pa., former Commission on Overseas Mission worker in Colombia, in a sermon in the morning worship service. Soto based her claim on the story of Moses as outlined in Hebrews 11:23-26.

"Resistance means disobedience," said Soto Albrecht. Moses' mother and sister chose to resist Pharaoh's law and keep the baby boy alive, she said.

"Today in Latin America there are thousands of Christians—laypeople, pastors, church leaders, promoters of the word, nuns and priests—that have been tortured and martyred for resisting and saying no to the economic, political and military laws that kill life," Soto Albrecht said.

Christian resistance also means choosing a lifestyle in the reach of others, she said. She outlined how Moses chose to identify with his oppressed people rather than stay with the comforts of Pharaoh's household.

And Christian resistance means abandoning all. Moses did so to lead the children of Israel out of the exploitation slavery, cruelty and death of the Egyptian system.

"By faith some Christians have chosen to denounce the injustice of their government," Soto Albrecht said. For that some have died. She remembered Jose Chuquin, a Colombian Mennonite church leader and a member of Mennonite World Conference's executive committee, who was gunned down by guerrillas shortly after MWC's 1990 assembly.

Yet even in the midst of death and oppression, for the Christian there is hope, said Peter Stucky, Mennonite pastor in Colombia, in his evening sermon.

"God's purpose in the world is hope," Stucky said. "It is for a social order in which human beings enjoy well-being in every way, a human family in peace with each other and with nature," he said.

Because God wants hope, God's Spirit helps to bring it to pass. Stucky told how a group in his country worked hard to get a conscientious objector (CO) clause in Colombia's new constitution in 1989. Resisted at every step by government officials, the group thought they had been defeated. To their surprise, when they read the new constitution, there were the words, "No one shall be forced to act against conscience."

"That is the work of God's Spirit—and it's unstoppable," Stucky said.

"Do you know how many formed the nucleus of the CO movement in Colombia?" he went on. "Eleven."

Stucky said that Mennonites and Brethren in Christ number approximately .02 percent of the world's population. With the power of the Spirit, "Can you imagine God working through a minority this size?" he asked.

Not that there won't be tremendous opposition. Stucky reported that the day he left for India, the intelligence section of the Colombia national police working against terrorism had visited the seminary where he teaches, with orders to close it down, apparently because of the seminary's work in peacemaking. [See *The Mennonite*, Feb. 11, page 15, and this issue, page 18.] *J. Lorne Peachey*

> ***"Today in Latin America there are thousands of Christians that have been tortured and martyred for resisting and saying no to the economic, political and military laws that kill life."***
>
> **Elizabeth Soto Albrecht**

> **"Let us turn from our arrogant claims to position and power, letting the mind of the Suffering Servant be our pattern."**
>
> **—Letter from Calcutta**

Closing worship: 'Christ's love, the world's hope'

If the Spirit was speaking at Calcutta to the churches, the job of those who addressed the Sunday morning worship service was to sum up what it had said.

Their consensus seemed to be that one message from the Spirit was, The non-Western churches have come of age. Learn from them.

"Yes, we are young," said Charles Christano of Indonesia, a former Mennonite World Conference (MWC) president, in his closing sermon. "We are weak. We are poor. But the Lord of the church says we are great."

It may be time to turn the missionary tradition around, Christano said. "Might it be time for those of us in the emerging churches to go to the West and the North?" he asked.

Myron Augsburger, a U.S. Mennonite evangelist, was one of two speakers assigned to tell what they thought the Spirit had said. His list of messages from the Spirit included evangelism—"go into a world of many cultures and religions and lift Jesus higher"—and mutuality and equality. "I believe the vitality of the church has shifted from the West to the East," Augsburger said. "We need you to help keep us from losing our souls. ... We are now a global community."

The other speaker asked to discern the Spirit's message was Doris Dube of Zimbabwe. She said the words heard at the conference needed to bear fruit in action. She also praised the conference's unity and fellowship.

"When it has been impossible to talk, we have shared the language of love," she said. "In our hearts we have been united."

MWC executive secretary Larry Miller read a "Letter from Calcutta" approved by the MWC executive committee and addressed to Anabaptist congregations around the world. Among its statements were these:

"We have witnessed rich variety represented by more than 4,000 people with many tribes, languages and cultures. We treasure our differences. May God's creative beauty shine through the patterns, colors and traditions enlivening our assembly, which for the first time had more brown faces than white.

"We have felt divisions and broken relationships that mar our fellowship. Let us turn from our arrogant claims to position and power, letting the mind of the Suffering Servant be our pattern. Let us be reconciled so that with integrity we may be ministers of reconciliation through Christ's love, the world's hope.

"We confess our idols of possessions, politics and cultural heritage. Let us turn away from all that detracts from godly worship, turning to Jesus. ...

"Let us live our faith in a way that pervades all of life. Let us be brave enough to live our faith so that we may be brave enough to suffer for our faith."

The conference concluded with Communion. Leading in the serving of the bread and cup were the outgoing MWC president, Raul Garcia of Argentina, and the incoming president, Mesach Krisetya of Indonesia.
Paul Schrag

God's creative beauty: *Two participants at Mennonite World Conference converse.*

Jon Warren

Memories of Calcutta: God spoke

Conference sermons may be forgotten, but images of Calcutta are forever fixed in memory.

Barefoot children in filthy clothes. Majestic temples. Crippled beggars. Man-pulled rickshaws. Choking air pollution. Boys playing cricket. Rats. Once-grand buildings crumbling into ruin. Traffic chaos. Women picking through piles of garbage.

And most of all, people—12 million of them—filling the streets with a mass of humanity.

"It's an amazing intersection of worlds," said Jim Loepp Thiessen of New Hamburg, Ont. "I've had the tears so close to the surface, I feel emotionally raw."

For many of the 4,500 people who attended the 13th Mennonite World Conference Assembly Jan. 6-12, seeing the suffering in the "City of Joy" put their own lives in a new perspective.

"In Russia they say everything is so terrible, but look at this poor population," said Willie Peters of Novosibirsk, Russia. "We have no cause to complain in Russia when we look at the poor folk here."

Along with images of poverty on a massive scale, conference attenders took home memories of those who ease the suffering. The most famous of these are the nuns of Mother Teresa's order, the Missionaries of Charity.

Groups of Mennonites attended Mass with the nuns at the convent where Mother Teresa lives. Some volunteered at her places of ministry, including the Home for the Destitute and Dying. A few even saw Mother Teresa when she received Communion in her wheelchair during the convent's Jan. 11 Mass at 6 a.m.

Ernie Hess of Lancaster, Pa., was part of the group who saw the frail, elderly nun, acclaimed worldwide for her service to the poorest of the poor.

"She's been somewhat of a hero of mine," he said. "It was a special gift for a few moments to be in the same room with her."

Mother Teresa had been scheduled to bring greetings at the conference's opening night but was too ill.

Those who volunteered at the Home for the Destitute and Dying helped bathe the patients, some of whose bodies were covered with sores.

David Shenk of Mountville, Pa., described the contrast between the enjoyment of the conference and the grim reality of patients near death.

"You sit here in this wonderful worship and then go work with the nuns who wear masks to keep the contamination out," he said. "It took me out of my ivory tower."

Emily Friesen, a student at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, was part of a group of 10 that volunteered at one of the Missionaries of Charity sites. They cleaned beds and floors, and fed and bathed the sick and handicapped patients.

"It's what I'll remember most from the trip," Friesen said. "It helps us understand some of the things Jesus did, helping the sick and poor."

Several conference attenders said it was good to hold the gathering in a place that gave a first-hand look at the depth of human need.

Alex Romero of Orange Walk, Belize, said North Americans and Europeans made a statement by coming to Calcutta.

"If we were in North America or Europe, we would be in huge buildings and have everything we needed, but here I see that you came to live in the real world," he said. "It is a reminder to us that we are just pilgrims in the world. This city changes our worldview."

For Hector Argueta of Guatemala City, Guatemala, God spoke through the Calcutta experience. "Everywhere we move about in the city, God speaks to us in the living conditions of the people," he said. "That is why Mennonite World Conference was wise in having this conference in this setting."
Paul Schrag

"It is a reminder to us that we are just pilgrims in the world. This city changes our worldview."
Alex Romero

Unity that transcends cultural differences: *Scenes from Calcutta include (clockwise from right) a young participant taking a nap; Reformed Sadus performing at center stage; J.P. Masih (right), from India, the assembly's master of ceremonies and a translator, speaking with two Mennonite World Conference assembly participants.*

Jon Warren

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Jon Warren

Reflections: '...how fragile we are'

James Schrag, general secretary for the General Conference Mennonite Church, has attended Mennonite World Conference sessions in Winnipeg and Wichita, Kan. But after attending MWC in Calcutta, India, Jan. 6-12, Schrag hopes, for the most part, that future MWC sessions will be held in non-Western countries.

"In Calcutta, there were more brown faces than white faces," he said. "In that setting, the true composition of the [worldwide] Mennonite church is better represented."

The change in location also meant that participants heard more from Asians and other Third World participants. "It was an eye-opener for North Americans to understand the cultural and economic conditions under which many Mennonites live," said Schrag.

Although the differences were obvious, Schrag was also struck by how Mennonites from countries such as India are "just like us." He noted how the Indian churches are dealing with issues—from leadership to witness to church planting—similar to their counterparts in North America.

A personal highlight occurred when he formed a prayer circle with an Indian woman and several North American and European participants. "The Spirit spoke as we held hands and prayed together. I felt a unity that transcended cultural differences," he said.

Schrag and his wife, Judy, spent three years in Kenya, 1967-1970, and visited Haiti during the 1980s. However, although he had seen a greater degree of poverty and degradation in Haiti, Schrag said his trip to India still was "an incredible cultural overload. It was not easy with the mass of people, the press of humanity on you all the time. … It was a lesson in how fragile we are in terms of what we can absorb."

In addition, he was constantly reminded of "how much we North Americans require to be comfortable." He recounted an incident from the first day of MWC: When the buses that were scheduled to take participants back to their lodging did not show up at the appointed time, the North Americans, including himself, thought nothing of hailing taxis to take them to their destinations. The taxi fare was a pittance by Western standards. However, the Indian participants waited for the public buses and trams. *Carla Reimer, news editor for General Conference Mennonite Church*

Paul Schrag

'God spoke to us': *Dr. Tushar Naik (center) at Sewa Bhawan Hospital in Jagdeeshpur*

A godsend to India's rural poor

There are two ways to judge Sewa Bhawan Hospital in Jagdeeshpur, India. By Western standards, it's primitive. By the standards of rural India, it's a godsend.

That's the only standard that matters to the patients. Many have little or no money to pay for medical services. "Widows and beggars come and can't pay," says Dr. Tushar Naik, the hospital's medical superintendent. "We don't say no to anyone."

> ***"Poverty is the biggest disease we have to deal with."***
>
> **Tushar Naik**

This is fortunate, because there's no other hospital within at least 70 miles. The fact that General Conference Mennonite Church missionaries started a hospital here in 1932 has been the difference between life and death for many rural villagers.

It's essentially a regional medical center for the rural poor with serious illnesses.

"Poverty is the biggest disease we have to deal with," Naik says. "There's a lot of malnutrition, lack of education, lack of family planning."

For example, Naik says, "Women get abortions in the villages from local quacks and end up with terrible complications." Sewa Bhawan Hospital does not perform abortions.

Since some patients earn only 20 rupees (less than $1) a day, the hospital's charity is essential. Although a major operation costs only 4,000 to 5,000 rupees ($114 to $140), that's still way beyond the means of a typical patient. Costs would be four to five times higher at a big-city hospital.

Because the 100-bed hospital provides so many unpaid services, it has to be frugal. Rather than using disposable syringes, the staff sterilizes and reuses each needle about 15 times. Adding to the challenge, most of the hospital's equipment is 30 to 40 years old.

Still, Naik and his wife, Kanchan, also a doctor at the hospital, are here by choice. When they came in 1993, the hospital had no surgeon and was "falling down and dying out," he says. "God spoke to us that we should go to this place."

"Our aim was to serve where there was a need," Tushar Naik says. "We wanted to work for the Lord."

The hospital's ministry is not limited to medical services. Evangelistic services are held twice a week. These include preaching, singing and prayer for the patients. "The response of patients and their relatives to our preaching the Word of God to them is encouraging," Naik says.

The hospital's spiritual emphasis continues the vision of the first Mennonite missionaries at Jagdeeshpur, Samuel and Metta Moyer, who arrived in 1923. They saw the need for a medical ministry when a girl, whom they had done their best to care for in spite of their lack of medical training, died in Metta Moyer's arms.

The Moyers sought a missionary doctor, and in 1928 Herbert Dester answered the call. He started a dispensary at Jagdeeshpur. The hospital opened in 1932 on land donated by the Queen of Saraipali (a local region), after she received treatment from Dester.

Others serving at Sewa Bhawan over the years have been Joe Duerksen, Homer Janzen, Annie Penner, John Dueck and Wendell Wiens.

In 1973 the hospital's ownership was transferred from the General Conference Mennonite Church to the Emmanuel Hospital Association, an Indian Christian group. All Mennonite missionary properties were transferred to Indian ownership during that time. *Paul Schrag*

"We thank God they sent the missionaries to India. We did not know God. We were in the dark. Now God is in our hearts."

Priscilla Martin

Returning home to India

Ramoth Burkhalter was coming home. After 42 years as a missionary in India, the place she lives now, Berne, Ind., is a foreign country to her. "I'm returning to family members and spiritual children," Ramoth said of visiting Jagdeeshpur. "This is my family."

The people of Jagdeeshpur—a predominantly Mennonite village of 1,500 in the heart of India—certainly greeted her like family. Time after time they embraced her, sometimes with tears in their eyes.

Paul Schrag

Seeds sprout: *Ramoth Burkhalter*

Ramoth and her late husband, Edward, served in India from 1947 to 1989. Now she was returning, along with about 30 other Mennonite World Conference Assembly Scattered participants, to this longtime site of General Conference Mennonite Church mission work.

Assembly Scattered provided opportunities for MWC attenders to visit Indian Mennonite congregations and places of Mennonite ministries for three days before or after Assembly Gathered in Calcutta Jan. 6-12.

One group, which included Americans, Canadians, Germans and one person from Switzerland, was in Jagdeeshpur Jan. 2-5. For many, it was a highlight of their conference experience.

"It has by far exceeded my expectations," said Helmut Isaac of Glenbush, Sask., who came with his wife, Dory, and four daughters. "These people have so little yet are so generous."

That generosity was displayed in villages, congregations, homes and a school. In the villages of Jagdeeshpur and Dangania, groups of young people greeted the visitors by dancing down the main road, playing drums and cymbals and singing.

Tea and biscuits: Welcoming services were held at Bethel Mennonite Church of Jagdeeshpur, Salem Mennonite Church at Dangania and Emmanuel Mennonite Church at Basna. Residents welcomed the visitors into their homes for tea and biscuits. At Jansen Memorial School, students performed a program on an outdoor stage.

Again and again, people expressed gratitude for the work of the missionaries—the Burkhalters were the last to leave in 1989—and for the visit of the world conference participants.

Priscilla Martin, a resident of Jagdeeshpur, invited several visitors into her simple home and said, "We thank God they sent the missionaries to India. We did not know God. We were in the dark. Now God is in our hearts."

William Walter, a former principal at the Jansen school, said, "We are excited and honored and grateful to God and to you people for visiting us. It is not a burden at all. It is a privilege."

For Ramoth Burkhalter, the visit brought the satisfaction of seeing a lifetime of service for God being carried on by Indians. "One of the joys of growing older," says Ramoth, "is that you see the seeds sprout that you have planted." *Paul Schrag*

Letters

POLITICIZED GOSPEL

I am concerned about the politicizing of the gospel I read in the article "Crying Peace When There Is No Peace" (Nov. 12, 1996, issue, page 3). As I read this article, I sensed that Mennonite Central Committee is less a spiritual force in Palestine than a political force. Is MCC most concerned with spreading the good news of Jesus Christ, salvation by grace through faith, or in producing political change?

Do they not know, have they not heard that peace can only come as individual lives are transformed by faith in the "Prince of Peace"? Do they not know, have they not heard that peace and justice are empty without saving faith in Jesus Christ?

I am concerned by what I have read. The article seemed to be more about political activism '60s-style than the mobilization of a faith community to reach their city and country for Jesus. True peace is found in changed lives, not changed politics. *Arthur Simpson, Congerville, Ill.*

STIMULATING, CHALLENGING

The articles in *The Mennonite* are stimulating, challenging, instructive. I appreciate the column on prayer by Marlene Kropf and hope you continue it. It is much needed in our churches. Also the series on the Trinity by Darrell Fast (Nov. 26, Dec. 10 and Dec. 24, 1996, issues) was timely and so important. *Jane Friesen, Phoenix*

DO NOT CRITICIZE ISRAEL

I recently read the editorial in the Nov. 12, 1996, issue: "Peace and Security in the Middle East," by J. Daryl Byler.

Every time I read this type of article, I cringe for the people that criticize the people of Israel. Do these people know they are speaking against the chosen people of God? Speaking against the posterity of Abraham can be considered cursing. Proverbs 27:14 says, "He who blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing." Any Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) delegation that takes upon itself the authority to go and judge the nation of Israel is not doing the will of God. They do not have my blessing. For God said in Genesis 12:3, "I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves." This goes for all Abraham's posterity.

Our MCC representatives are taking the liberty to speak for the church. Yet MCC is supposed to be the arm of the church. Normally the body is wagging the arm, but of late in our Mennonite churches, the arm is wagging the body. For these people without exemption judge situations on a worldly standard. Such activities should be the decision of the church.

MCC seems to attract activists who want to build the kingdom of God in this world. Yet Christ said his kingdom is not of this world; it is a heavenly kingdom. Yet the Israelites are the chosen people of God, which we as believers should not forget, for our God is not finished with them.

For several decades the Mennonite church has incorporated a peace teaching in its theology, giving other churches the impression that we have a clearer understanding of Scripture. I have found no evidence to support that claim. There are many passages dealing with peace, but most are concerned with peace in the church. There are no Scriptures that make the church responsible for peace and justice in the world. See Matthew 10:34; Luke 10:6; Romans 12:18; Revelation 6:4; Ecclesiastes 3:14, and Revelation 22:18-19. Do we fear the Lord? *Abe Janzen, Coaldale, Alta.*

RACIAL PREJUDICE REVERSED

I believe that one of the ways to end racial struggle is to discover, celebrate and learn about other cultures and peoples. I grew up in an all-white town and school but was taught that all people are equal no matter what they look like. Even so I formed racial prejudices without knowing it.

I recently visited Sumter County, Ga., and had a real awakening. I learned about a different culture and way of living. I threw out those prejudices I had formed, but I also saw the problems. The usual white on black racial prejudices were reversed. Working in a community where blacks were in all the positions of "power," I saw that whites had little or no say in any of the major decisions that affected everyone. In realizing the problem, the community discussed it, but nothing was done, even though some people, mainly whites, were willing to work on the problem.

I'm sorry to say it, but, as my friend told me, the blacks in this situation had been oppressed for many years, and when they got into positions of power they began and are abusing it.

It is the grim truth, but in order to work out racial prejudices all people, of all races, creeds and colors, have to give a little and compromise—like in marriage (less than 1 percent of all American marriages are between blacks and whites). *Elizabeth Kingsley, Bluffton, Ohio*

PSEUDOSCIENCE

Phillip E. Johnson, law professor at the University of California (Berkeley), in his book *Darwin on Trial*, argues that "we do not know how the immensely complex organ systems of plants and animals could have been created by mindless and purposeless natural processes, as Darwinists say they must have been. Darwinian theory attributes biological complexity to the accumulation of adaptive micromutations by natural selection, but the creative power of this hypothetical mechanism has never been demonstrated, and the fossil evidence is inconsistent with the claim that biological creation occurred in that way. The philosophically important part of the Darwinian theory—its mechanism for creating complex things that did not exist before—is therefore not really part of empirical science at all but rather a deduction from naturalistic philosophy."

When H.R. Schmidt refers to "science" (Letters, Jan. 14 issue, page 10) what he really is referring to is pseudoscience based on naturalism. I would highly recommend Johnson's book to anyone seriously interested in this controversy. *Name withheld by request*

Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity.*

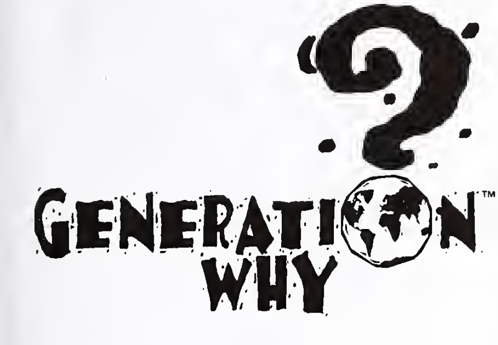
News

Presbyterians adopt Generation Why Bible Studies

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Generation Why Bible Studies series, the youth curriculum published by the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Church of the Brethren (COB), received a "thumbs up" review from the publishing corporation of the Presbyterian Church USA.

As a result, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation will promote Generation Why this spring in the 11,300 congregations that belong to the Presbyterian Church USA.

"When we first developed this curriculum, we thought it would have real potential for marketing outside General Conference and Church of the Brethren congregations," says Susan E. Janzen, editorial director for Faith & Life Press (GC). Generation Why, a four-year curriculum, released its first title in fall 1995.



She notes that staff at the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation felt Generation Why was a standout compared to other curriculum they examined. They were impressed that Generation Why addresses the tough questions that many youth have about their faith, as well as the fact that the curriculum has a strong promotional campaign, she says.

"The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is optimistic that up to 17 percent of the churches will decide to use Generation Why. This would more than triple our existing sales volume," notes Christopher Scott, Faith & Life Press director of customer services. Currently about 450 GC and COB churches use the youth curriculum.

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation will also promote the Fast Lane Bible Studies series, which is published by Faith & Life Press for junior high students.

To order any of the Generation Why Bible studies or the Fast Lane Bible studies, contact Faith & Life Press, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114-0347; 1-800-743-2484, flp@gcmc.org; or Faith & Life Press Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4; (204) 888-6781. *Carla Reimer*

Vancouver area named 1997 City on a Hill

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church has named the Vancouver metropolitan area its 1997 City on a Hill.

The City on a Hill project was started by CHM in 1994 to support Mennonite urban church work that models a holistic approach to the gospel.

As a result of their City on a Hill designation, Mennonite congregations in the Vancouver area will receive a $20,000 U.S. grant and resources from CHM staff during 1997.

While Vancouver's population is growing, many of the existing Mennonite churches in the city are losing members to the suburbs, says David Chiu, director of evangelism and church development for the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia.

"We have to be aggressive in reaching out. We have no other choice if we want to be faithful," he says, adding that a recent Angus-Reid survey indicates that British Columbia has the highest unchurched population in North America.

The urban ministry proposals submitted by Vancouver area churches include plans for discipleship training, church planting and a Hispanic community center, which would provide medical services, employment training, English-as-a-second language classes and prayer services.

The projects "need to be congrega-

Inside the news

Colombia seminary remains open / p. 18

General Council approves Sharing Fund distribution / p. 20

Canada team marks progress by relationships / p. 21

The 39th annual Illinois Mennonite Relief Sale will be held March 7-8 in the Peoria (Ill.) Civic Center Exhibition Hall.

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The Church of Christ in Thailand invites Christians to a day of prayer for Burma, March 16. The Christian church in Burma struggles to maintain its witness amid strictly limited freedoms. (*A Common Place*)

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The 110th annual World Day of Prayer, an ecumenical, international worship service sponsored by Church Women United, will be celebrated March 7. The 1997 World Day of Prayer was prepared by Korean Church Women United on the theme "Like a Seed Which Grows into a Tree." Resource materials are available from Church Women United, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 500, New York, NY 10115, 1-800-CWU-5551.

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Jews, Catholics and Mennonites gathered at St. Martha's Catholic Church in Sarasota, Fla., last November for an interfaith worship service. Members of Bahia Vista Mennonite Church attended, with pastor Barry Loop reading the Old Testament lesson during the service and the church choir participating along with choirs from St. Martha's and Temple Emanu-el Synagogue. The service concluded with three benedictions—in Hebrew from the rabbi, Latin from the priest and English from the pastor. (*Gospel Herald*)

tion-based for us to have credibility," says Chiu. "It is one thing for us to say, 'We love you and care for you'; it is another thing for people to be able to see what discipleship means.

"Strong and committed Christians are the best tools to begin any kind of urban ministries. And these people should come from churches that already are in the vicinity."

Mennonites in the following metropolitan areas have received City on a Hill funding: Denver (1996), Toronto (1995), Fresno, Calif. (1994). Urban Mennonite churches in the United States and Canada that combine evangelism, peace and service may apply for a City on a Hill grant by contacting CHM, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. *Carla Reimer*

The next assembly of Mennonite World Conference will be held in Africa, the MWC General Council decided Jan. 12. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, will be given first consideration as the site, with Zambia and Zimbabwe as second and third choices, respectively, if the Ethiopian site is not feasible. Ethiopia has the second-largest number of Mennonites in Africa, behind Zaire.

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Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hualien, Taiwan, received more than $75,000 U.S. from Taiwanese donors through a three-month program initiated by Northwest Airlines last fall. Northwest awarded 500 bonus miles for each $40 U.S. donated to the hospital. Donors could collect up to a maximum 5,000 bonus miles. "The Mennonite Hospital has helped hundreds of people during its 50 years and fills an important need in our society," said George Wang, Northwest's Taiwan general manager, in a *China Post* article. The hospital recently expanded its operations, increasing the number of beds from 200 to 500 and establishing a new trauma center.

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Before the first Italian Mennonite choir could perform, many of its members had to learn to read music. The choir debuted in November 1996 at the annual conference of the Chiesa Evangelica Mennonita Italiana in Palermo, Sicily, which was attended by nearly 300 people. Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions workers spent three months translating "Then Came the Morning" into Italian. About 30 people from each of the six congregations in Sicily practiced for more than six months. The Italian conference, which has fewer than 200 members, dates from 1949 when Franco Ceraulo was baptized by Mennonite relief workers. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

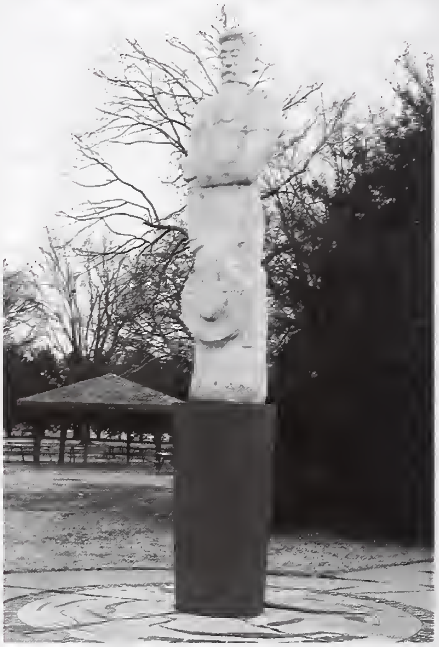
Trying to save the Settler

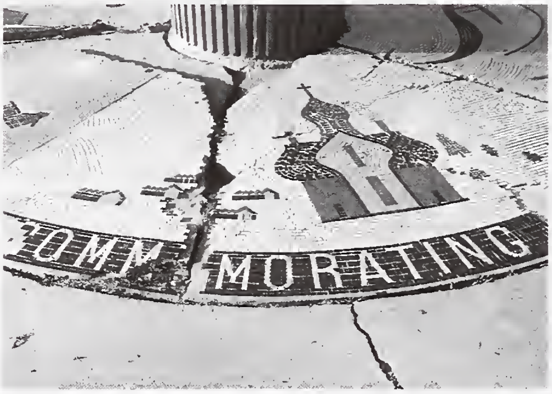
Newton, Kan.—A local chapter of Save Outdoor Sculpture, or SOS!, a national organization, has formed here to preserve a stylized depiction of a Mennonite settler.

The sculpture and mosaic at its base, dedicated in 1942 at its current location in Newton's Athletic Park, depict the immigration of Mennonite settlers from Russia and the introduction in 1874 of Turkey Red hard winter wheat to the Newton area.

The artist was Kansan Max Nixon, who used a mixed media of carved limestone, cast concrete and mosaic. Newton stonemason Vernon T. Roberts laid the mosaic following Nixon's design.

The monument today is in poor condition due to weathering and other damage.





The SOS! Newton Committee is made up of volunteers representing the Harvey County Historical Society, the Newton Fine Arts Association, the Newton Convention and Tourism Bureau and the Kauffman Museum at Bethel College, North Newton. *Melanie A. Zuercher with SOS! Newton material*

Colombia seminary remains open

Santafe de Bogota (GCMC)—Although the Colombian government's Division Against Terrorism and Crimes of Impact has ordered the closure of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary here (see Feb. 11 issue, p. 15), the seminary and its controversial Hacedores de Paz (Peacemakers) program, "remains open and functioning," says Colombia Mennonite church leader Peter Stucky.

The Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church jointly support work in Colombia.

There is a chance that the order to close the seminary will get buried due to bureaucratic negligence, says

Stucky. A recent report by the U.S. Department of State, which criticizes the state of human rights in Colombia, also may help their case, he says.

On the other hand, says Stucky, nothing can be assumed, given the fact that the Division Against Terrorism and Crimes of Impact falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense.

The alleged grounds for the closure order is that the seminary does not meet the government's educational requirements, he says.

In meeting with Mennonite church, seminary and JustaPaz representatives, Stucky notes that "we must be clear about the reasons for this effort to close down the seminary: It is because of the number of young men who are studying in the [Peacemakers] track in lieu of military service."

The track was added to the seminary program two years ago as a legal alternative to military service. All male high school seniors are required by law to register and serve in the military unless rejected or waived. The Colombian government does not recognize conscientious objectors.

Over its first two years the Peacemakers program has grown from five students to 74. As the number increased, the military recruitment office began to oppose this form of nonviolent resistance.

"The seminary's Peacemakers program has been stepping on the army's toes. The Mennonite church is pioneering conscientious objection in Colombia," says Marco Guete, seminary director since mid-November 1996. "This is new for the army and they aren't going to stand for it. That's why they [are] trying to close down the seminary.

"[We are called] to be spokespersons for the biblical position on peace. So we have to run the risks that entails. ... I also am running risks because I am the person who signs the requests for recruitment stays," says Guete. "I ask the North American Mennonite church for their prayer support." *Carla Reimer with Peter Stucky*

Friends in Irian Jaya

Pearl Sensenig (MCC)

These children in Irian Jaya, one of Indonesia's poorest provinces, are wearing clothing donated by Indonesian Mennonites from the island of Java. After a 1995 visit to Irian Jaya, Indonesian Mennonite leader Paul Gunawan organized Mennonites in Java to collect 39 big boxes of clothing.

Several resources available for free loan from Mennonite Central Committee introduce children to Irian Jaya. These are available separately from MCC or together in the "Asia Box," which also includes information on Thailand and Laos. Contact MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151, or MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9; (204) 261-6381.

"All God's Creatures: Friends in Irian Jaya" (five-part leader's guide for Bible school or Sunday school assemblies) may be purchased from Herald Press: in the United States, call 1-800-245-7894; in Canada, (519) 747-5722.

More than 10,000 people visited an ice sculpture in Pittsburgh made by Lowell Brown, a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker there. Brown was commissioned to build a temporary sculpture for the city's New Year's Eve celebration. "Ice Furnace" was a circular wall of ice blocks surrounding a large bonfire, placed in the center of downtown Market Square. As midnight approached, the ice melted, and by the beginning of 1997, the wall had almost completely disappeared. (*Gospel Herald*)

• • •

Over the past five years, a Lincoln, Neb., firm called Apartment Movers has helped a couple hundred women escape domestic violence and leave home with more than just the clothes on their backs. Marcy Metzger of Lincoln's Rape-Spouse Abuse Crisis Center says that she can call the company at any time of the day or night, and it will send movers to help the woman, and children if she has them, leave home with their possessions, even if they aren't able to pay. The Crisis Center staff have developed a resource bank that also includes locksmiths, carpenters, lawyers and mechanics who offer women free help. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

• • •

Brethren/Mennonite Parents of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Children invite families to the eighth annual Connecting Families Weekend, intended as a safe, relaxing time to share common concerns regarding homosexuality as it affects families and churches. The retreat will be held April 11-13 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Pennsylvania, with resource person Helen Quintela, pastor at St. Paul (Minn.) Mennonite Fellowship. Contact Connecting Families, 242 Cats Back Road, Ephrata, PA 17522; Brethren/Mennonite Parents of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Children, P.O. Box 1708, Lima, OH 45802; BMC, P.O. Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406-0300; (612) 305-0315; e-mail BMCouncil@aol.com; home page http://www.webcom.com/bmc/

Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College officially became Fresno Pacific University on Jan. 11. It is the second U.S. Mennonite college to adopt the university name (after Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.).

• • •

Paul Mininger, 88, president emeritus of Goshen (Ind.) College, died Jan. 23 at Greencroft Health Care in Goshen. While serving as GC president from 1954 to 1970, Mininger was instrumental in implementing many changes, most notably the addition of the Study-Service Term into the curriculum. Students spend 14 weeks in a foreign country as part of SST, learning the language and culture of the host country and working in a service-learning assignment.

• • •

Ashland County, Wis., law enforcement officials arrested 11 members of Christian Peacemaker Teams Jan. 19. The CPTers celebrated Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday by symbolically closing down the U.S. Navy's Project ELF facility. Short for "extremely low frequency," ELF uses radio waves to signal the Navy's 16 Trident submarines, each armed with over 24 megatons of H-bomb explosive power, to surface in preparation for a nuclear first strike. Sixteen members of CPT's January nonviolence training gathered with more than 50 others from across the country to witness against the nuclear war "trigger," regarded by many as a relic of the Cold War. In an open-air "people's court," the group put ELF on trial, charging the facility with crimes against humanity and the environment. Responding to a verdict of guilty, 11 CPTers walked to the front gate of the facility, singing, "Guide my feet, oh Lord," and wired "Closed" signs and boards to the fence. As CPTers climbed the fence to place signs within the ELF facility, they were arrested for trespassing on government property. After a citation, the CPTers were released.

MWC Council approves Sharing Fund distribution

Calcutta, India (Meetinghouse)—The Mennonite World Conference General Council, meeting before the Jan. 6-12 Calcutta Assembly, approved a distribution schedule for a unique fund intended to empower non-Western churches.

MWC will begin distributing money from a $950,000 U.S. Global Church Sharing Fund to African, Asian and Latin American churches this summer. Each national conference belonging to MWC, outside of North America and Europe, will receive at least $3,000. The size of the grants will be determined by how many members a conference has. The only requirement is that the money be used to advance the work of the church.

The bulk of the fund comes from a $600,000 gift from Mennonite Central Committee and a $300,000 gift from Mennonite Mutual Aid.

MWC executive secretary Larry Miller says the Sharing Fund is unique among worldwide Christian bodies. "It's attracting attention in other Christian world communities," he says. "It's being observed to see if it's a worthwhile experiment." One of the fund's purposes, according to the General Council proposal, is "to transfer money and decision-making power from churches who have more to churches who have less."

Paul Schrag

Spirit fire: *Mesach Krisetya, left, of Indonesia, lights a lamp at the opening ceremonies of Mennonite World Conference Assembly 13 in Calcutta as Vern Preheim of the United States watches. The assembly theme was "Hear What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches." Krisetya was later elected president of MWC.*

The fund will be divided in the following way:

- $600,000 for distribution to Asian, African and Latin American churches;
- $95,000 for a Gifts Sharing Project, whose purpose is "exchanging human resources and strengthening relationships between member churches";
- $200,000 to be placed in an endowment; and
- $55,000 for administration of the fund.

The fund will be distributed in two phases, the first in 1997 and the second in 1999 or 2000. The second phase will begin after churches give reports on how the funds have been used.

The General Council also approved a statement of mutual expectations between MWC and Mennonite Central Committee. The statement is based on the idea that MCC and MWC can complement each other in serving the worldwide church.

"Mennonite World Conference is a global structure but has very little infrastructure," Miller says. "We can develop visions but are short on implementation possibilities." MCC has the infrastructure: "a network of staff and relationships both with Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches and beyond, which can be offered as a resource to the global family of churches," according to the statement.

The statement is a "recognition that we [MCC and MWC] are compatible," Miller says. "Let's recognize our interdependence."

The General Council also elected a new president, Mesach Krisetya of Indonesia, and a new vice president, Bedru Hussein of Ethiopia.

Meeting at the end of the Calcutta Assembly, General Council also approved a "Resolution Regarding the Burning of Church Buildings" in response to recent events in Indonesia, Nigeria, Jamaica and the United States.

"We stand in prayer with those who have been the target of violent acts which seek to destroy not only buildings but also the spirit of those who meet within them," the statement reads.

It calls on all churches of the MWC global family "to seek ways to respond in love to those who have committed these acts and to those who have been victims." The resolution also encourages churches to participate "in the rebuilding of these structures and the restoring of human spirits." *Paul Schrag, J. Lorne Peachey*

Canada team marks progress by relationships

Riverton, Man. (EMM)—In progress measured by numbers, the Canada Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team isn't seeing big results.

Jenny Weaver

Not too 'churchy': *YES team members Priscilla Li, left, and Maria Hurst, center, play games with Joi Fisset at a Saturday night youth drop-in in Riverton, Man., while other youth play Ping-Pong behind them.*

But big numbers don't mean much in three small communities around Lake Winnipeg.

"I believe we are making a difference here, even if it seems it's just a little at a time," says Kevin Weaver, who with his wife, Jenny, leads the four-member team.

The team was invited by the Riverton Fellowship Circle, pastored by Neill von Gunten, who with Edith, his wife, has been serving with Native Ministries of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada for 30 years. The von Guntens and a support group from the Fellowship Circle supervise the YES team.

The Weavers of Lititz, Pa., along with Maria Hurst, Lititz, and Priscilla Li of Hong Kong serve with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Native Ministries.

The team lives in Riverton (population 650) but divides its time between Riverton, Pine Dock and Matheson Island. Hurst and Li remain in Riverton. The Weavers travel north for two or three days each week to Pine Dock and Matheson Island, where about half the residents are aboriginal people, most of Cree ancestry.

The YES team has discovered that building friendships among Native people in these communities takes time. An attempt to start a youth group in Riverton failed when no one showed up for four weeks.

"The name 'youth group' sounds too churchy, and the kids don't want to have anything to do with God," says Kevin Weaver.

Now the team hosts an informal drop-in each Saturday night at the Friendship Centre, the local community building, where teens can play pool and Ping-Pong and just hang out. "We must work slowly at building friendships and trust," he says. "Our best strategy is to become friends with the people and model a life that pleases Christ."

In Pine Dock and Matheson Island, each with a population of 100-110, worship services are small. Anywhere from two to 18 people attend the weekly meetings led by YES team members and Neill von Gunten.

The Riverton Fellowship Circle is growing, however. About 40 people currently attend services held in the community building. The church is raising funds to construct a building this spring.

Slowly the Weavers are beginning to see results from their ministry on Matheson Island.

"When we first came here, the youth said that we can have fun activities for them but not anything where they have to hear 'God talk.' So that's what we did," says Jenny Weaver.

"But we continued to have kids' club (Sunday school) for the younger kids on Mondays. Now, the youth are starting to come to kids' club," she says.

Hurst and Li volunteer at an adult day-care program in Riverton and teach Christian education classes in the elementary school.

The team also spends much of their time visiting in people's homes. "It helps us understand more of the Native culture and build relationships," says Li.

"We feel that some friendships we made here are starting to grow stronger and that there is more trust," says Kevin Weaver. The team will complete their eight-month outreach in April. Until then they will continue to build relationships with time for snowmobiling and ice skating in between.
Carol L. Wert

Mennonite Conciliation Service will co-sponsor an advanced training in congregational consulting for conciliation practitioners in the peace church tradition at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., March 10-14. Trainers are Nancy Good Sider and Jim Yaussy Albright. For information and registration materials, write Advanced Training, c/o On Earth Peace Assembly, P.O. Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188, or call Kate Johnson at (410) 635-8706.

• • •

More than 40 Quakers from the Germantown, Green Street and Chestnut Hill Friends meetings in Philadelphia joined the congregation of Germantown Mennonite Church for worship on Jan. 5 to show support for the church's acceptance of noncelibate homosexuals. The Germantown congregation, a member of the Eastern District (General Conference) and Franconia Conference (Mennonite Church), and its leadership have faced disciplinary action by both area conferences. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

• • •

Members of Iglesia Pentecostes Restauracion, Milwaukie, Ore., joined the Jan. 19 morning worship service of Sunrise Mennonite Church, Clackamas, Ore., and Sunrise members worshiped with Iglesia Pentecostes Restauracion that evening. Each service was followed by a meal, during which members of the Hispanic and Anglo congregations had opportunity to interact informally. The worship exchange allowed the two congregations, who are discussing the possibility of buying and sharing a church meeting place, to meet one another. Both congregations are members of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. (*Teresa Moser McDermid*)

Director of Development position available at **Chicago Mennonite Learning Center** with the following responsibilities: coordination of a capital and operating fund-raising campaign; grant writing to charitable foundations for financial support. This is a half-time position. Starting date is April 7. For more information, contact **Marvin Friesen, Principal, CMLC, 4647 West 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632; (773) 735-9304.**

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For complete description and faculty application form, write or phone **Dr. Howard Loewen, Academic Vice President, Fresno Pacific University, 1717 S. Chestnut, Fresno, CA 93702; (209) 453-2023; fax (209) 453-5502;** e-mail **hloewen@fresno.edu.** Position begins **Aug. 15, 1997.** Women and members of minority groups are especially encouraged to apply.

Vice president and dean of academic affairs: Bluffton College invites applications for a position beginning **July 1, 1997.** Qualifications include commitment to the mission of a Mennonite church-related liberal arts college; earned doctorate; demonstrated administrative leadership, and teaching experience. Consideration of applications begins immediately and continues until an appointment is made. For more information see **http://www.bluffton.edu.**

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Reviews

FILMS

DON'T CRY FOR MADONNA

Evita, *written and directed by Alan Parker, produced by Robert Stigwood and Andrew Vajna, rated PG*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

Evita is the largely historical story, based on the rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, of Eva Duarte (Madonna), a girl from rural Argentina who made her way out of the barrio to Buenos Aires and slept her way to stardom and eventually to the pinnacle as First Lady of the land—by then married to Juan Peron (Jonathan Pryce). The musical/movie credits Eva in large part for Peron's political success (he came up through military ranks). She had a gift for speaking to the masses of Argentina as "one of them," even dressed in furs and designer dresses, and rallying them to the Peronista/Labor cause.

By the time Eva died of cancer in her early 30s (this is not giving away the ending, as the film opens with an announcement in a crowded movie theater of her death), she was a popular heroine and icon. Che (Antonio Banderas) is an Argentinian Everyman, popping up in Eva's vicinity as a bartender, a janitor, a maitre d' and a theater patron, to provide the voice of cynical realism in contrast to the slavish adoration of Eva by the masses.

As with a stage musical, almost every word in *Evita* the movie is sung, and I have little doubt Madonna has the best voice of anyone ever to sing the role. Banderas is a surprisingly good singer in addition, and in my opinion a more intriguing character.

Despite this, my first thought as the credits rolled was, "*This* is what all the hype was about?" The people of Argentina spend all their time in this movie stampeding up and down streets to rally for Peron, run from the army or gather by the hundreds of thousands underneath Eva's balcony. Pryce is unable to show me why anyone would want to elect Juan Peron president, and Madonna never seems to be much more than, well, Madonna.

I suspect those who have seen the stage production or are fans of the opera's soundtrack will be more forgiving than I of *Evita* the movie. My assessment is that it did not jump the genres very well.

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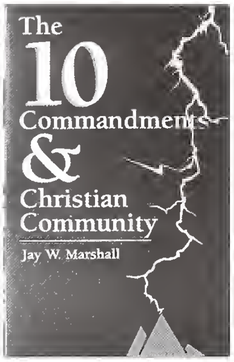
BOOKS

COMMUNITY CODE

The 10 Commandments and Christian Community *by Jay W. Marshall (Herald Press, 1996, 128 pages, $8.95 U.S./$12.80 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by James Nickel, Winnipeg



The 10 Commandments & Christian Community
Jay W. Marshall

Can the Bible teach us what to do if space aliens visit Earth? Can the Old Testament commandments help us understand and live with the changes in society brought on by advances in medicine? Is it possible for these ancient Ten Commandments to be useful, constant pillars of community life in an ever-changing moral universe?

Jay W. Marshall answers yes to at least the last question. He proposes that people crave community and that communities have codes of conduct that serve as boundary markers, and he makes the case for the Ten Commandments as code of behavior, vital for Christian community today.

Extensive use of story makes this book easily readable. He also includes limited references to the New Testament as well as the rest of the Old Testament.

While this book breaks new ground by placing the Ten Commandments as community boundary markers, it does not dirty its hands with biblical exposition. The study guide doesn't pretend to be a commentary. Little attention is paid to the language and culture of the Israelite people as the context into which the commandments were given.

Can the Bible help us deal with an invasion of space aliens? Perhaps—but it can certainly help with something much more important: modeling real community.

This book proposes a wonderful and practical application of the Ten Commandments in our church communities. If we were, as Marshall proposes, to use these commandments as boundary markers, our churches would become more attractive to people seeking community.

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Editorial

Learn to receive as well as give

At dusk, under the weak glow of a single light bulb, with a cool breeze blowing through open windows, a group of Mennonites from five countries began to sing. The place was Emmanuel Mennonite Church of Basna, India. The song was "How Great Thou Art." The language was whichever one you knew.

The linguistic mixture was not memorable for its musical quality. Unforgettable, however, was the realization that this group of Westerners and Indians—who had so little in common otherwise—could belt out four verses of the same song by heart.

> *The one thing we had in common—our Christian faith—had more power to draw us together than all our differences had to separate us.*

That moment, which occurred during a Mennonite World Conference Assembly Scattered visit in central India on Jan. 4, proved a great truth: The one thing we had in common—our Christian faith—had more power to draw us together than all our differences had to separate us.

Remembering this truth may be a key to fulfilling one of the church's most important goals in the coming years: becoming a world fellowship whose members relate to each other as equals.

Stanley Green, president of Mennonite Board of Missions, described this vision of equality in a sermon during MWC Assembly Gathered in Calcutta:

"The challenge for the Mennonite family in the coming years will be to transform our relationships and adjust our attitudes, to move from the awkward charity of the West and the dependency of the rest to a true mutuality … where we all can give and receive."

We in the West are more used to giving than receiving. We're used to giving orders about how to do things. Are we ready to hear what non-Western Mennonites are telling us?

For example, Charles Christano of Indonesia, in his Sunday morning sermon, chided those who like their sermons short. (Brevity was not the hallmark of world conference sermons.) But his deeper point was this: A simple gathering of unsophisticated people may be spiritually richer than a professionally orchestrated worship service. "While everything is going smoothly, all the time the Lord of the church is locked outside," he said.

This is not to say that the churches of the developing world are populated by perfect saints. Indian Mennonite conferences, for example, have been afflicted by leadership conflicts notoriously hard to solve. Churches everywhere have weaknesses to work on as well as strengths to share.

Networks of communication: Foundations for sharing were built in Calcutta. Peacemakers and theologians started networks of communication. A Global Church Sharing Fund will begin distributing a Western asset—money—to churches in the rest of the world this year.

India 1997 reminded us that our worldwide Mennonite fellowship is one of our greatest assets. We will reap the benefit of it only if we learn to receive as well as give.

> *Are we ready to hear what non-Western Mennonites are telling us?*

Those who attended the Calcutta conference received much. It sometimes made us uncomfortable, because we're accustomed to being the givers. Since we know equality will take some getting used to, now is the time to start working on it. *Paul Schrag*

Paul Schrag, editor of Mennonite Weekly Review, *wrote this editorial for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors.*

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112: 05
MARCH 11, 1997

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Hmong New Year's celebration held at Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church

Prologue

This issue marks the third time we have featured the church-planting project called City on a Hill. The project stems from a resolution at the 1992 triennial sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) to support new and emerging churches in urban contexts. The wording, of course, comes from Matthew 5:14, where Jesus says, "A city built on a hill cannot be hid."

The first two City on a Hill projects were in Fresno, Calif., and Toronto. This third one focuses on the Denver area. In each case the Commission on Home Ministries of the GCMC designates an urban area where mission work is happening and provides a $20,000 grant and staff support.

Carla Reimer, who has resigned her position as GCMC news service editor, effective Feb. 28, wrote the stories and took the photos you see on pages 3-9. She has captured some of the exciting yet difficult mission work going on among Mennonites in the Denver area. This includes work among Hmong, an ethnic group originally from Laos. Shoua Moua (page 8) serves in one of the principal roles in this work.

Elsewhere in this issue, Marlene Kropf explains why she believes there is not such a thing as unanswered prayer (page 11).

J.B. Miller asks how U.S. Christians should respond to welfare reform (page 12).

Also check out pages 13-23 for news and reviews. *gh*

Next issue: The church's money and mission

Cover: Photo by Carla Reimer

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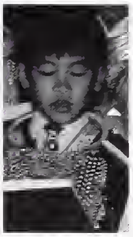
9 Emmanuel: God with us



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The Mennonite is a member of Associated Church Press, Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse (a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group) and an associate member of Canadian Church Press.

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Denver area Mennonites plan for future growth.

A PLACE OF GREAT OPPORTUNITY

The articles and photos on pages 3-9 are by Carla Reimer, former news editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Mennonites in the Denver metropolitan area want to capitalize on the growing population in this region of Colorado.

"Denver is a place of great opportunity," says Merv Dick, director of Mennonite Urban Ministry, a cooperative outreach project of the Denver area Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren churches. The Denver Regional Council of Governments predicts that the population will increase by 750,000 in the next 20 years.

"We want to expand the Anabaptist witness here. We want to look outward, draw people in who are not a part of us," he says."We can do this by offering a holistic approach to the gospel, one that does not overlook the dispossessed, the poor, people of color."

Based on a demographic study, the goal is to plant two Hispanic churches, one Hmong church and three suburban churches by the year 2015. It is a realistic plan, says Merv, given the success of past church planting in this region.

Fourteen years ago, there were only three Mennonite churches in Denver and what is known as the Front Range, which includes cities within an hour's drive of Denver. Today, there are six Mennonite congregations.

The Great Commission: Other Denver area leaders share Merv's commitment to spreading the gospel. "All churches need to be growing and prospering. The Great Commission is to go and make disciples," says Steve Ortman Goering, co-pastor of the Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Shoua Moua left the Hmong congregation he started in Fresno, Calif., to start a church in Arvada, Colo. "I need to take responsibility for the larger ministry of the church. I can't focus only on one location," says Shoua.

The vision of these leaders, among others, was recognized by the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church when it named the Denver area as its 1996 City on a Hill. This designation includes a $20,000 grant and staff support. Merv serves as the City on a Hill coordinator.

The Western District Conference and the Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference are also providing primary support to the church planting in this region of Colorado.

> ***"We want to offer a holistic approach to the gospel, one that does not overlook the dispossessed, the poor, people of color."***
> ***Merv Dick***

CITY ON A HILL
DENVER

A GOOD THING

Mennonite pastor Steve Ortman Goering outlines his vision for church planting in Colorado.

Carla Reimer

For nearly 15 years, Steve Ortman Goering developed systems to reduce air and water pollution as part of his job as a chemical engineer. Today, as he sits in the pastor's office at Boulder Mennonite Church, he admits he made a big leap when he switched careers about 10 years ago. He shares the pastorate with his wife, Susan Ortman Goering.

Yet, while the subject matter is drastically different, the problem-solving skills he learned as an engineer serve him well in this profession, too, he says.

Others would most likely agree with his assessment. For example, when Marilyn Miller asked him to write a church planting plan for the Denver metropolitan area, he said yes. Marilyn is the director of outreach ministries for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

"I don't see myself as a professional church planter," he says, adding that his proposals are "more horse-sense. In order to have successful church plants, it is necessary to present the Mennonite perspective of the gospel to those who are most receptive to it."

In his earlier days, Steve was even "skeptical about evangelism and the numbers game." He points to the success of the Boulder congregation as to why he is sold on the idea of church planting today.

"It's been a good thing. A lot of different people have found God here, and that has changed their lives," says Steve, observing that more than 60 percent of the members are new to the Mennonite faith.

"For those who grew up Mennonite, it is important to have a Mennonite church in Boulder," he adds. "It's unlikely that many of them would have driven to Denver for church. Probably they would have joined another denomination or fallen away from the church."

Besides the Boulder congregation, two other churches—Peace Mennonite Community Church in Aurora and Mountain Community Mennonite Church in Palmer Lake—have been planted in the last 14 years in the Front Range, an area that is within an hour's drive of Denver.

More resources: The fact that the number of Mennonite churches in this region has doubled means there is "much more strength in what we do," Steve says. "We have more resources for programs like Self-Help stores, the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program and Mennonite Urban Ministry."

It also means the congregations are able to do more church planting. "I believe our membership will support new churches if the leadership provides a concrete vision," he says.

The 37-page document Steve wrote outlines the church-planting vision for the Front Range. The number of existing Mennonite churches here, as well as the increasing population, make this a fertile area for church planting, he argues.

"This particular area may also be more open to the Mennonite faith because of the political and social leanings of the people who live here," Steve says.

"As a whole, Mennonites are not particularly good at planting churches."
Steve Ortman Goering

Still, he cautions that "new churches should arise out of our understanding of need and our relationships with people. We can't do everything. Some things may not happen [as we expected]."

The key to a successful church plant often lies with finding the right leader, he says. "Not every pastor is a church planter; not every church planter is a pastor. It takes a unique person to start a church from scratch, a strong person of faith, an entrepreneur who can create something out of nothing," Steve says.

As a whole, Mennonites are not particularly good at planting churches, he says. "One reason for this might be that we do not see ourselves as part of mainstream culture. ... A larger question is that we have not been able to learn how to invite people to our faith. Perhaps this is because we have not understood the significance of the church community for ourselves and that others yearn for the same thing.

"All churches need to be growing and prospering. The Great Commission is to go and make disciples," he says. "I see Mennonites as offering a holistic gospel, where there is a personal relationship with God as well as ministries in the community."

"We need to know as much about everyone as we can, in order to feel camaraderie with them."
Heidi Fuentes

A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL

Arvada Mennonite Church members want closer ties with Hmong.

Carla Reimer

When Heidi Fish moved with her family to Denver from a small community in upstate New York, the 15-year-old had only interacted with people of her own skin color, which happens to be white.

"At my high school, I was introduced to blacks and Hispanics for the first time. I never knew who they were before," she says.

Today, as the mother of two girls, Heidi wants to make sure her children are aware of other races. "It is a small world. We need to know as much about everyone as we can, in order to feel camaraderie with them," says Heidi, who is pursuing an education degree.

Her husband, Daniel Fuentes, shares her commitment to global awareness. His family immigrated to the United States from Spain when he was

Daniel and Heidi Fuentes

CITY ON A HILL DENVER

9 years old.

An English literature teacher at a public high school, Daniel has begun teaching English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes because of his interest in cross-cultural communication.

The couple, who attend Arvada Mennonite Church, like the fact that their congregation has been reaching out to Hmong families by offering garden plots to them. They also are excited about a Hmong church planting project, which started this year.

While the project is still at the beginning stage, the Fuentes are eager to learn as much as possible about the Hmong culture. "I would love to know more about the Hmong people and for them to know more about us," says Heidi.

Through Daniel's contact with Hmong high school students, he was invited to attend a Hmong education conference. In traditional Hmong culture, he says, the children have specific chores they are expected to do from a young age.

"Here, they have less responsibility, which leads to delinquency," says Daniel, adding that economic and language barriers often prevent Hmong children and youth from participating in the extracurricular activities that are available.

Hmong parents often feel like they no longer have control over their children, while their offspring think they don't have enough freedom, he says.

Daniel hopes the Arvada Mennonite Church will be able to help the Hmong with some of these issues by offering ESL classes as well as parenting classes. He thinks the congregation will be sensitive to the need for the Hmong to maintain their ethnic identity.

"If we only end up building a church for the Hmong, I will feel cheated because I want a closer relationship," says Daniel.

> ***"If we only end up building a church for the Hmong, I will feel cheated because I want a closer relationship."***
>
> **Daniel Fuentes**

Maintaining their ethnic identity: *Hmong New Year's celebration held at the Arvada Mennonite Church meetingplace*

DOWNRIGHT NEIGHBORLY

Stan and Marlene Smucker practice what they preach.

Carla Reimer

Stan and Marlene Smucker are the kind of people most everyone would love to have as their next-door neighbors. Yet this relaxed, outgoing couple has not chosen to live in the middle-class suburbs that much of America yearns to call home.

Instead, the Smuckers have spent a good portion of their married life in the inner city, where they often were the only whites around.

What they learned from their experiences in African-American communities in Toledo, Ohio, and Oklahoma City during the 1960s and 1970s, and with Hispanics in La Junta, Colo., in the 1980s has been critical in shaping who they are today, say Stan and Marlene.

"I experienced a greater level of acceptance and hospitality within the minority communities than I had experienced in Mennonite culture," says Stan. "It showed me something about God's acceptance of me as a person and as a white Mennonite."

It also changed the way the couple looks at Scripture. "I read the Bible with different eyes," says Stan. "Jesus cared for the broken, the people who experienced injustice. Those passages jumped out at me when I saw that reality in front of me.

"At the same time, I saw the privileges I had as a white American. It no longer made sense that Jesus came to protect my white privilege. I realized that in order to be a bringer of justice, I must deal with the oppressor in me," he says.

The Smuckers have been co-pastors of Arvada Mennonite Church since 1989. It is the first predominantly white congregation they have been involved with during their more than 30 years of ministry.

Given their past, it is not surprising that they are energized by the Hmong church planting project the Arvada Mennonite Church initiated about a year ago.

About 20 Hmong families grow vegetables on the land surrounding the Arvada church building. The project was begun more than 15 years ago.

"Here we had these people working the church land all summer and, while it was obvious that they were, for the most part, excellent gardeners, it also was obvious they were struggling with the language and culture," says Stan.

The congregation started to talk seriously about a church planting project with the Hmong as part of its Living in Faithful Evangelism (LIFE) process, which took place between 1992 and 1995.

Marlene and Stan Smucker

When Shoua Moua, after a preliminary visit, agreed to plant a Hmong congregation, the dream became a reality. His work is supported by the Arvada congregation, Western District Conference, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference and the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

The Smuckers wish more Mennonites would be involved in cross-cultural ministry. "The church needs to be about living in community with each other," says Stan. He adds, citing Galatians 3:27, that Christians who do not learn to know people of other races and backgrounds are missing out on a piece of the gospel.

> ***"The church needs to be about living in community with each other."***
>
> **Stan Smucker**

"I have always felt that to follow Christ is to reach out to others," agrees Marlene. "We have to recognize that we have more in common than we have differences. … The opportunities to relate to people of color are there if you look for them."

LITTLE TIME FOR CHURCH

Hmong in Arvada, Colo., have adopted the Western pace of life, says church planter Shoua Moua.

Carla Reimer

As much as Shoua Moua relished his role as pastor of the Hmong Community Church Mennonite in Fresno, Calif., he felt like the time was ripe for him to make a change.

Consequently, Shoua decided to accept the invitation to plant a Hmong congregation in Arvada, a city with a population of about 90,000. He moved there with his wife, Chou, and their three sons, in February 1996.

During his five years of leadership in Fresno, the Hmong church plant grew in size from 20 adults and children to 350. In Arvada, he is once again starting from scratch.

But for a man who dreams of one day having a network of Hmong Mennonite churches in North America and southeast Asia, it is precisely the kind of challenge he could not turn down.

"Many people [from my church] in Fresno said they had broken hearts when I left. But I need to take responsibility for the larger ministry of the church. I can't focus only on one location," he said.

The Hmong people have typically resided in mountainous areas in China and southeast Asia. When the Communists gained power in Laos in 1975, large numbers of Hmong fled to Thailand, where they resided in refugee camps. Some Hmong, including Shoua's family, emigrated from Thailand to Western countries. There are approximately 130,000 Hmong living in the United States.

About 80 percent of the 1,500 Hmong who are living in the Arvada area are employed, and at least 50 percent own their homes, says Shoua, adding that some are moving here from other parts of the United States because the job opportunities are good. In the majority of cases, both the husband and wife work.

However, while the economic conditions create a stable environment for the Hmong families, they make his job more complicated, he says.

In Fresno, for example, since a large number of the Hmong were unemployed, Shoua spent much of his day visiting them in their homes. By contrast, in Arvada he finds he spends about seven hours a day in his office because everyone is working.

White culture: "It is more difficult to do church planting here because people are very busy. There are few chances to meet with them," he says. "During the weekdays they are at work and on weekends they like to go on family outings. They tend to follow [the schedule] of the white culture, not the Hmong culture."

When he began offering a Bible study class for young families, it took three tries before he found a suitable time to meet, he says. Currently an average of 20 adults and children attend.

Traditional Hmong culture places high value on the relationships within the extended family. In Laos, where the Hmong primarily earned a living through agriculture, the parents depended on their children for support

> ***"It is more difficult to do church planting here because people are very busy. There are few chances to meet with them."***
>
> **Shoua Moua**

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in their later years, says Shoua.

In North America the extended family ties are weakening as some Hmong are moving away from their clan in search of employment. With both the husband and the wife working outside of the home, communication between parents and their children is also lessening, says Shoua.

"The Hmong children who grow up here receive support from their schools and society to a greater degree than what their parents would have experienced in Laos," he says. "The children tell their parents, 'We have choices. We want to do what we want to do.'"

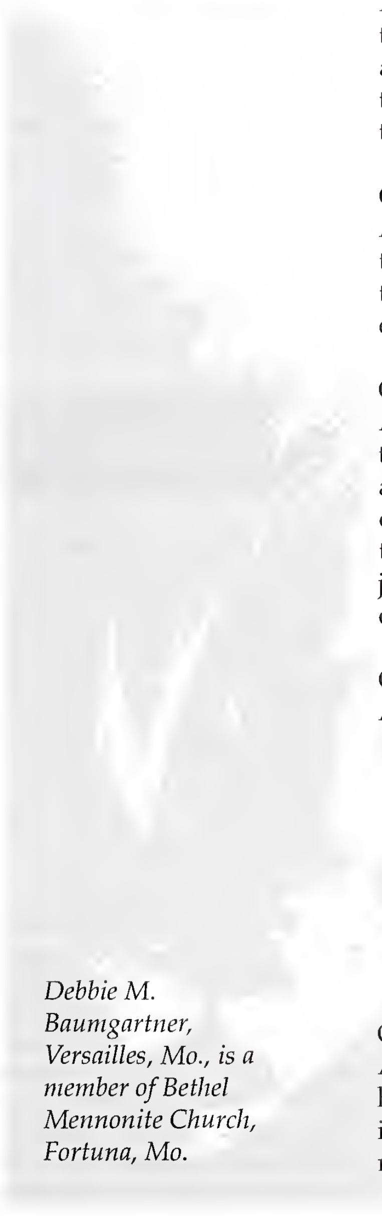
In his sermons Shoua makes links between the Bible and the cultural dilemmas the Hmong are facing. "I try to encourage them not to take Hmong culture or American culture but to follow what God wants," he says. "God wants us to help our children when they have problems and encourage them when they do well."

Five Hmong churches, affiliated with other denominations, have been planted in the Denver area. They have a total attendance of about 1,000. The majority of Hmong still believe in the spirit world and rely on a shaman to provide healing in their lives.

"My long-term goal is to help Mennonites spread the gospel to the Hmong people in the United States and overseas," says Shoua. "I want to see all Hmong churches serving the Lord, reaching out to non-Christians around the world." Including the Arvada church plant, there are five Hmong Mennonite congregations in North America.

EMMANUEL: GOD WITH US

Debbie M. Baumgartner



Once there lived a man on earth.
And when he walked
the glad trees raised
their bright arms,
and the leaves beat out their praises,
glorystruck.

Once there lived a man on earth.
And when he met the small children,
they rushed upon him,
  leaping
  and dancing,
  leaping
  and dancing,
to the music in the air.

Once there lived a man on earth.
And when the young men heard his talk,
they packed their belongings
and began
their long journeys
toward the stars.

Once there lived a man on earth.
And when the young women saw him,
they sang
the finest love songs
ever heard.

Once there lived a man on earth.
And after they heard him,
the older men
and women
came together and considered
that, maybe, the dark night was really
just the beginning
of dawn.

Once there lived a man on earth.
And when he spoke,
  the sunlight sang,
  the raindrops danced,
  the rainbows pierced the earth
  to the center of her heart.
  The mighty planets lurched in their orbits
  arhythmically,
  ecstatically,
  around him.

Once there lived a man on earth.
And now
he lives
in
me.

Debbie M. Baumgartner, Versailles, Mo., is a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Fortuna, Mo.

Letters

TERMS DIVIDE

This note is to express my appreciation for the fine issue relating to racism (Jan. 14). I would like to raise one issue and make one observation.

I work with many Hispanic, Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian people every day. These individuals do not seem to want to be called "Vietnamese-Americans" or "Cambodian-Americans." I am of Germanic descent but would not want to be called a German-American. I wonder if the term African-American in itself divides rather than includes. Depending on the survey one believes, most black people would agree with this feeling.

I was saddened to read in "MCC Supporters in Three Groups" (Jan. 14 issue, page 15) that in spite of 80 percent of Mennonite Central Committee's constituency sharing values in areas like the poor, volunteer work, spending less on self, and belief in God, one of these groups is referred to as "the most progressive on social issues" while the other two are referred to as being "conservative on social issues." This continues the stereotype that conservative Mennonites somehow are not progressive and those who are not conservative are somehow progressive. May we each respect another's way of living out our faith in social issues. *Lee Delp, Lansdale, Pa.*

ENCODED MESSAGES

I have recently discovered that secret messages have been encoded into the words "Mennonite church." If the letters are rearranged, words of teaching and prophecy are found, such as these:

"Then munch on rice" (an encouragement to simple living),

"Rich nun then come" (a call to reach out to other faiths),

"Much thinner once" (as a consequence of attending too many church dinners).

Many more messages may be contained in historical words and phrases. *Robert Erck, Lombard, Ill.*

SURPRISED AND TROUBLED

The responses to my article in the Dec. 10, 1996, issue ("The Christ of Faith in the Jesus of History") have been both surprising and troubling.

First of all, I must admit that my use of the phrase "sheer folly" was a poor choice of words in the article. I did not intend to imply that it is foolish to believe in a miraculous catch of fish or to believe that it might have occurred more than once.

I continue to believe in miracles and am constantly amazed at their frequency—in Bible times as well as our own. (I am sorry to report, however, that in all my endeavors at fishing I have never been the recipient of a miraculous catch.)

Be that as it may, when I read John 21 I have this hunch that I have heard this story before. It sounds similar to Luke 5. Isn't that interesting? Could it be that what we have here is two accounts of the same event? There are certainly enough similarities to suggest that possibility.

That is basically all I was trying to suggest in a rhetorical way—after all, this article was first of all a sermon. I was hoping that this intriguing correlation might draw the listener/reader into the biblical story of a miraculous catch of fish, which led to a transformed life.

Now comes the part that troubles me. If one is tied to a literal reading of the events of Jesus' life as recorded in the Gospels, one cannot even allow such a question as I have posed above. And that, I submit, leads to an impoverishment of the human imagination, and the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Let us continue to delight in the Scriptures, with all of their miracles, mysteries and apparent contradictions. *Darrell Fast, Newton, Kan.*

GOOD BALANCE AND FLOW

I just finished reading the Feb. 11 issue. I am elated over the coverage you gave Christian Peacemaker Teams. There was a good balance of articles, and there was a good flow from one to the other. I very much appreciated your editorial and the ideas you gave for ways people can support CPT. Your fine work on this issue is going to give a big boost to CPT. The Feb. 11 issue is a step along the way in helping Ron Sider's original vision of a troop of 100,000 peacemakers become reality. *Marilyn Miller, Boulder, Colo.*

FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Hualien, Taiwan—It now appears we will have some used operating-room equipment as well as 10 new computers to send to (Mennonite-operated hospitals in) India. We are checking to see if Mennonite Christian Hospital here will help pay for the shipping. (Other options for helping to pay for the shipping costs are being sought.) *Chris and Lois Leuz*

Macau—How does one begin a church from scratch? How does one find time to develop friendships in a place where people are so busy working long hours and often seven days a week? How does a small team of just a few missionaries make an impact in a city that has so much spiritual darkness?

Macau is the gambling capital of Asia. Gambling, prostitution and corruption are big problems. There are more prostitutes (7,000) in Macau than Protestant Christians (3,500).

We live with God's word of encouragement and promise. It is God that builds the church. We are only to be faithful and obey. We pray that God will make us full of the Holy Spirit. We want to hear the Spirit's voice so that we know what God wants us to do at each step along the way. We want others to see Jesus in us and among us so that they too will be drawn to him.

Our mission team is made up of four individuals—the nucleus of the Mennonite church in Macau. We pray that God will fill the church and add to our numbers. Praise be to God who can do more than we ask or even imagine. *George and Tobia Veith*

Learning to pray

Is there unanswered prayer?

Three reasons for saying no to this question.

Marlene Kropf

We were sitting in Sunday school class talking about prayer when someone asked the question, "What do you think about unanswered prayer?" As the discussion moved on, I realized that I no longer believe there is such a thing as unanswered prayer.

When I tried to retrace my steps to see how I had come to this conclusion, I discovered several markers along the way—at least three of them—that indicated the direction I had turned at certain critical junctures. Here they are:

My theology of God has changed.

Although I am sure I was taught as a child that God always hears our prayers, I remember being puzzled and discouraged when certain prayers seemed not to be answered. This was especially confusing when I knew I was praying for something God also wanted, such as the salvation of someone who had turned away from God. This quandary made more logical sense when I also came to understand free will—the precious gift of freedom given to human beings to make choices of our own.

Whatever doubts I may have secretly nursed about God's dependability have vanished as I have immersed myself in the Psalms. Psalm 139, in particular, has transformed my understanding of who God is. A God who is present in every molecule of creation, including my own body, surely hears the cries of my heart.

Marlene Kropf serves as minister of worship and spirituality for the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and teaches spiritual formation and worship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

God knows us and hears us. That is a given. Even when it seems God has turned away, God is never far from us—sometimes only waiting for us to discover how near God is.

My understandings of human nature have also changed.

Children naturally believe that whatever they want is good for them. One of the difficult lessons to learn in growing up is that my own desires may be harmful; what's more, I may not even know what my true desires are. Coming to know and understand my own heart has been a journey marked with many false starts and perilous detours.

> *The more I discover the truth God has planted within me, the more my vision of goodness—and thus what I pray for—will coincide with God's vision.*

Here again the Psalms have been a reliable tutor. Psalm 37:4 opened to me the surprising but welcome knowledge that God actually plants my deepest desires in my heart. As I delight in God, I come to know my heart more truly. The more I discover the truth God has planted within me, the more my vision of goodness—and thus what I pray for—will coincide with God's vision.

The agenda is clear: To grow toward maturity in prayer, I must also pursue self-knowledge.

My definition and expectations of prayer have changed.

A child's first understanding of prayer is often simple: "Bless me, help me or give me." If we are fortunate, we also learn to pray, "Thank you, and I love you." The giant step for me in the school of prayer has been the realization that prayer is a relationship with God and follows the same rules as any human relationship.

People who care for each other do not constantly ask each other for favors; more often, they simply enjoy being together. They listen to each other and trust each other with their deepest hopes and fears. They do everything in their power to make the other happy. If prayer is primarily a relationship, we come to God as we are and revel in each other's presence.

This understanding of prayer has changed the way I pray for my younger brother who has suffered from alcoholism for nearly 30 years. Where I used to plead, "God, make him stop drinking (so he won't be so miserable and so Mom and Dad and the rest of us won't suffer so much)," I now join the flow of God's love into my brother's life. I imagine my brother, before God, healthy and whole—freed from his terrible addiction. I know that's what God desires for him. And so together, God and I wait for the miracle of love to transform him.

Is it hard to keep trusting? Of course it is. But when I remember that God wants my brother to be transformed even more than I do, I can keep on loving and hoping.

Is there such a thing as unanswered prayer?

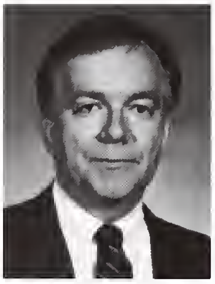
I think not. God always hears and responds. For my part, I must stay faithful to our covenant to be in loving communion with one another. And even that is a gift of grace.

> *If prayer is primarily a relationship, we come to God as we are and revel in each other's presence.*

Does welfare reform mean a new challenge for the church?

How should Christians respond to welfare reform?

J. B. Miller



J.B. Miller is vice president for financial services for Mennonite Mutual Aid and manager of Mennonite Foundation.

President Clinton promised that he would eliminate welfare as we know it. With the cooperation of a Republican-led Congress, he may have just done it.

Much will change for people dependent on the government to provide a financial safety net with the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. For years, much of welfare was regulated by the U.S. government, and cash was the primary form of assistance. That is changing under the new round of welfare reform. The focus now is on getting welfare recipients to enter the ranks of the employed and turning welfare programs over to the states.

The new legislation abolishes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and transfers these funds to states in the form of a block grant known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). States, not the federal government, must now design welfare programs for people in need. At the core of their design will be the belief that most adults on welfare are able-bodied and should be working. A prime component of reform is the requirement that any parent who has received two years of assistance from programs funded by TANF must be in some type of work program in order to receive further aid.

At the end of six years, 50 percent of all families with this support must be working at least 30 hours a week. This is more than double the number of people currently on public assistance who are working or involved in some type of work program. A further restriction is that no family can receive funding from TANF if an adult in the family has already received five years of assistance over their lifetime.

Will welfare reform work? Many people recognize there were abuses in the old system, and there was a feeling that something needed to be done to fix it. Politicians quickly realized that promises to change welfare made them popular with many voters. But is getting people off welfare and into the work force all that easy?

Learning disabilities: Research indicates that a disproportionate number of people on welfare suffer from a variety of problems, including depression, substance abuse and learning disabilities, including the inability to read or do simple math. Many people on welfare are victims of poor educational experiences and often have dropped out of high school. High school dropouts are not the most easily employable people, evidenced by unemployment rates that are five times higher than among college graduates.

IMAGEproductions

What about those who are fortunate enough to find employment? Do they earn enough to buy food and pay for housing? Most jobs open to the less-skilled pay poorly, have no benefits and not a lot of job stability. Here is a case in point: On average in 1994, a female high school dropout who was working full time earned a little less than $300 per week. This represented an 8 percent drop from 1979 in inflation-adjusted dollars. Among male high school dropouts (who earn more than their female counterparts), inflation-adjusted income declined by 20 percent from 1979.

How should I, as a Christian, respond to welfare reform? Should I have been lobbying my legislators to keep welfare in place, or do I support requiring people to work? Yes, I believe that requiring work is a step in the right direction, but I must also deal with the reality that many people currently on welfare are not employable. There are few jobs available for those with poor reading and math skills, and the few jobs that can be found often pay poorly. What will my response be to people in these circumstances who cannot find employment? Should all public assistance be cut off after five years?

> ***There is already a disproportionate number of children living in poverty. When government aid ends, these children may not have a safety net.***

Most troubling for me is what will happen to the children of these people once assistance is cut off. There is already a disproportionate number of children living in poverty. When government aid ends, these children may not have a safety net.

At that point there may be only one place for people in poverty to turn, and that is the church. When that happens, with what I know now, will I look these parents and their children in the eyes and say, "Get a job?"

What will you say?

MARCH 1997

a Common Place

WHERE WE MEET
IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

1996
Annual Report

Working
for a
world of
enough
for all

Mennonite
Central
Committee

“Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need” (Prov. 30:8b).

“MCC seeks to demonstrate God’s love through committed women and men who work among people suffering from poverty, conflict, oppression and natural disaster. MCC serves as a channel for interchange between churches and community groups where we work and the North American churches who send us, so that all may grow and be transformed.” (from MCC’s Mission Statement)

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600 - 45th Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9
(306) 665-2555

RAISIN
BREAD
$2.50
WHOLE
WHEAT
BREAD
$2.25

Child in Sudan. MCC photo by Howard Zehr.
Bread for sale at MCC Relief Sale. MCC photo by Heidi Thomsen.

On the cover: Pictured is Ganame Wendkouni who works on dam construction in Djibo, Burkina Faso, with MCC worker Steve Guether. MCC photo by Howard Zehr.

Center spread: Watering kale plants at dusk preserves precious moisture for this Brazilian farmer. MCC photo by Mark Beach.

a Common Place is published by MCC, a relief, service and community development agency that strives for peace, justice and the dignity of all people by sharing its experiences, resources and faith in Jesus Christ. Our point of view is shaped by the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ faith tradition and some 900 workers serving in 50 countries in food production, health, education, job creation, refugee assistance and conciliation. MCC is sponsored by the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America.

We're engaged in a "divine interchange"

by Ronald J. R. Mathies
MCC Executive Director

Mennonite Central Committee in 1996 continued to be an agent of divine interchange—and to work for a world of enough for all.

War and violence plagued many places we worked. The Great Lakes region of Africa was the focus of both MCC program efforts and media coverage. MCC workers in Burundi and eastern Zaire were forced to evacuate periodically. At the end of the year the human tragedy was of immense proportions. MCC, together with the Mennonite churches of Zaire and mission boards working there, called our churches to a day of prayer on December 1. Peacebuilding, food shipments and collection of blankets contributed to the sharing of sustenance and security.

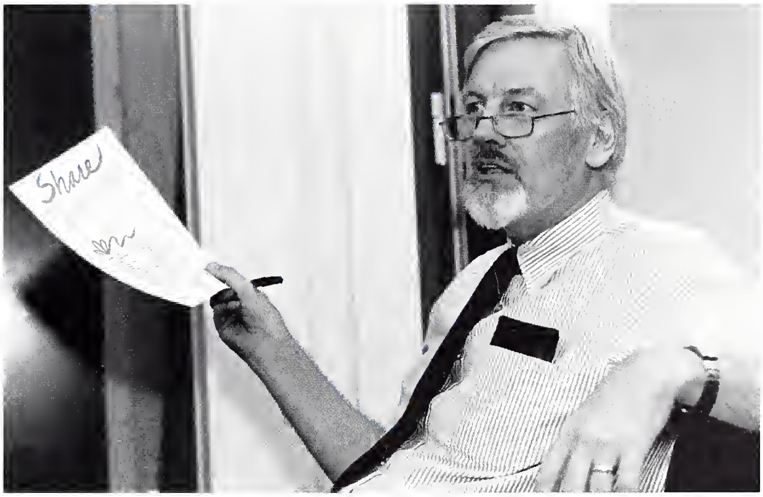
MCC also responded to ongoing turmoil in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia with peace education and relief supplies. The Christmas "Share" project sent 6,402 food boxes to our partner, Bread of Life, in Serbia. Many North American churches, families, schools and community groups gathered food so that others might have "something," even though still "too little."

Too much insecurity and the fear of invasion in Gaza and the West Bank in September resulted in invitations by Palestinian partners for delegations to see first-hand how peace efforts were being thwarted. Staff from the Ottawa and Washington offices travelled to the region and have since advocated for peace in their respective capitals.

MCC U.S. took significant steps this year to implement "Broadening the Vision"—an effort to address hatred and discord among people of different races and ethnicities in the United States. Plans were set in motion to establish a new service program in Philadelphia to attract participation across broad racial and ethnic lines. Eight staff also completed the "Damascus Road" training program for dismantling racism in institutions. The Racism Awareness Program and Mennonite Disaster Service cooperated in the "Ribbon of Hope" campaign to support African-American and other congregations whose churches were destroyed by arsonists.

Conflict resolution work across Canada continued to grow—along with interest in the foundational concept of restorative justice, which focuses on crime's harms rather than the rules broken. Community-based mediation agencies in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Labrador and New Brunswick form a network of MCC-related efforts. MCC supporters in Canada raised more than $11 million Cdn./$8.1 million U.S. for the work of MCC—through donations, and by working in thrift stores, relief sales and in other ways. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank MCC was able to send another $10 million Cdn./$7.4 million U.S. worth of food.

Hundreds of workers, thousands of volunteers and many more supporters in Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches and beyond enable MCC to continue this work, "In the name of Christ." ■



Ronald J. R. Mathies. MCC photo by Tony Siemens.

"Food is a gift to be shared. Action that seeks to make an adequate diet available to all people is a witness to God's love and grace" (MCC food policy).

In 1996 MCC supplied the following to some 30 countries:

food
12,791 metric tons valued at
$12 million Cdn./$8.8 million U.S.
(including 6,402 food boxes sent to the Former Yugoslavia)

clothes/bedding valued at
$2.2 million Cdn./$1.6 million U.S.

medical supplies valued at
$334,870 Cdn./$244,455 U.S.

school supplies valued at
$871,700Cdn./$636,342 U.S.

working for *enough*

"Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands" (Ps. 90:17).

María Elena Poma de López creates a kaleidoscope of colorful brushes—10 to 15 dozen a week—in a rickety lean-to in her backyard in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. María, prime supporter of her six children ages 8 months to 17, is one of some 20 individuals—mostly women with children and few job opportunities—that MCC workers have helped to start small businesses. María learned how to make brushes three years ago. An MCC worker helps her with accounting and marketing. MCC photo by Mark Beach.

"*Wow!* That's not much to make a real difference in her life," I thought as I read about MCC's income generation work in Bolivia. Money I might spend on a pair of winter boots, invested in a business idea of an impoverished Bolivian woman, has the power to turn her life around.

When deciding how to share a windfall, my spouse and I remembered the article in "a Common Place." We like how a mustard seed investment can grow and grow. We appreciate the human touch MCC workers add to a simple business loan. We value the gift's longevity—it benefits the recipient for life, and when the loan is repaid it can similarly help someone else.

Much of our wealth comes from the fluke of being born into a society with capital. We've long wanted to share capital with someone in the two-thirds world; this project helped us do it. Thanks.

—comments from MCC supporters ■

Job creation and economic development are increasingly significant parts of MCC's work. Growth of the global economy has created winners and losers—concentrating wealth, land and business opportunities in the hands of relatively few people. Those without access to the global economy, many of them women, face an increasingly desperate situation. More and more people are moving to urban areas, seeking jobs that cannot be filled by unskilled people.

Overseas MCC's job creation/income generation efforts seek to improve the situation of the "losers". Sometimes this means helping rural people generate income so they can stay in their homes. In other cases MCC also works with those on the fringes of urban centers, helping people establish viable businesses. In Canada, MCC creates employment for people who, for various reasons, have trouble finding and keeping jobs.

New jobs in Canada

"We want to be in solidarity with people who are poor in foreign countries and we want to be in solidarity with people who are denied opportunity in our own country."
—Garry Loewen, Employment Concerns Director for MCC Manitoba

Despite an improving economy, unemployment in Canada remains a chronic problem, hovering around 10 percent this past year. MCC is helping create jobs, particularly for the disadvantaged.

MCC Canada is a partner in a tire recycling company that will create more than 100 jobs in the economically depressed Atlantic provinces. The first recycling plant was up and running in early 1997.

In March 1996 MCC Manitoba entered into an agreement with the Province of Manitoba to help welfare recipients find work. The goal is to place some 250 people in full-time work over a two-year period.

A number of young people in British Columbia (B.C.) are gaining valuable on-the-job training and work experience through MCC-coordinated projects with an environmental focus: trail building, stream cleaning and tree planting. Other recent MCC B.C. employment initiatives include job training programs for abuse survivors and welfare recipients.

MCC Alberta has seen considerable growth in its employment development efforts over the past year. It now offers three programs: self-employment for low income people, job training for immigrants, and training for youth. ■

On-the-job training in British Columbia has an environmental focus. MCC photo by G. Bruce Hildebrand.

Chopping water hyacinth weeds is the first step to an income for this Bangladeshi woman. MCC photo by Pearl Sensenig.

Creating work from weeds

"Now I can support myself and I don't have to depend on anyone else," says Sitara Begum, taking a rare moment to rest in the doorway of her home. Toiling from dawn to dusk, Sitara cares for her daughter, milks her cows, cooks and cleans—and daily crafts about 60 sheets of paper in her "spare" time.

Many rural Bangladeshi women in Sitara's situation—a woman abandoned by her husband—must resort to begging. But Sitara is able to provide for herself, her child and her mother because of Biborton, an MCC job creation program.

Sitara collects water hyacinth, a purple-flowered weed that clogs her village's canals. She strips off the flowers and leaves, then chops, boils and mashes the fibrous stems. From the pulp she makes paper.

Over the past five years, MCC workers have researched ways to develop products from water hyacinth, using common household equipment and no electricity. They finally refined a process that produces export quality paper, now being sold in North America through Ten Thousand Villages (formerly SELFHELP Crafts of the World). Today 18 women earn income by making paper through Biborton. ■

enough peace

"Those who desire life... let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it" (from I Peter 3:10-11).

Christ's call to peacemaking is central to MCC's work. Workers seek to listen to the voices of peace, learn from indigenous responses and empower those working for positive change. In 1996 MCC has worked for peace by assisting war victims, by reconstructing following wars, by seeking to alleviate conditions causing conflict and by bringing people together across lines of conflict. Peacemaking can also prevent many devastating effects of war such as hunger, displacement and the breakdown of agriculture, medical and other community systems. Assisting refugees, who are the victims of war, requires much of MCC's resources—58 percent of food assistance, for example. In North America, workers mediate conflict and teach mediation skills. Commitment to peace translates into many involvements—through workers who "seek peace and pursue it."

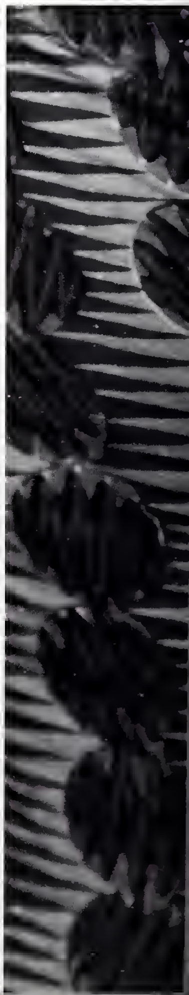
Demonstrating love to "enemies" in Iraq

Mother with a newborn in Mosul, Iraq. Many come to the hospital empty-handed, with no supplies for their babies. Photo courtesy of Michael Nahhal.

Every Friday Tahrir Square in Baghdad, Iraq, turns into a flea market—but with a serious air most North American shoppers wouldn't recognize. People are hawking their belongings so they can buy food. "Extras" have already been sold—now people are parting with those items closest to their hearts. A young musician implores passersby to purchase his record collection. Children sell their toys. A man sells his shower-size gas water heater. Hearing aids, eight or 10 of them, are for sale in a glass case.

People in Iraq continue to struggle under international sanctions, imposed in 1990 before the Persian Gulf War to punish Iraq for invading Kuwait. But those most adversely affected are Iraqi children born since then—a half million children under 5 are estimated to have died due to poor nutrition and inadequate medical care.

MCC demonstrates love to Iraqi people, who are labeled "enemies" by many. Despite delays in approval from the United Nations, in 1996 MCC was able to send comforters, canned meat and school kits to Iraq—most supplies went to children. As well, MCC has begun recruiting pediatric surgeons to serve on short-term medical teams to Iraq. ■



On the move

"When soldiers arrived in our compound, people began screaming and running. Two sons were with me. We grabbed a few things and followed the crowd. I didn't know where my wife and other seven children were," recounts Jonathan, a Rwandan forced to flee to Zaire.

Stories of killings, separated families, lost children and terror-filled flights from war zones have been repeated throughout central Africa in 1996, as in previous years. Some refugees, like Jonathan, were reunited with their families. Others are alone, haunted by the violence they have witnessed, uprooted from all that is familiar.

MCC tries to provide healing amidst the tremendous pain in this region. In Burundi, where violence continues to drive people from their homes, workers arrange meetings between Hutu and Tutsi church leaders. MCC also supports trauma healing workshops for women to share their stories and pray together. And MCC workers helped organize peace workshops in the Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire. By the end of 1996 most Rwandans returned home, although an unknown number remain in Zaire.

Canadian farmers' donations to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank enabled MCC to share food valued at nearly $5.5 million Cdn./$4 million U.S. in the region in 1996. Families, individuals and church groups throughout North America also donated thousands of blankets for needy people in Zaire. MCC photo by Dave Klassen. ■

The following is from a letter sent by recipients of MCC "refugee kits" in Belgrade, Serbia:

Dear friends,

Many miles separate us, but only physically while love, spirit and goodwill ties us together. All you are doing is a kind deed toward us who are in a stage of personal desolation and uncertainty, full of disappointment and bitterness.

For good people, the world is small. You showed us that. You did not ask for a meeting, did not select us because of religion, nationality or race. Your heart and soul had only one desire: to help those caught in a tragedy. We have faith in God because we are with him always. We believe that one day we will live normally, have our home, food and freedom, and meet all our needs through normal work.

We are grateful for everything you are doing to help us in these difficult moments.

Love from our family,
Vladimira Spasojevia

In 1996 MCC sent 4,664 "refugee kits," (boxes of hygiene supplies) and 6,402 food boxes to Bread of Life, an agency assisting refugees in Belgrade. MCC workers also participated in "Hope for the Balkans," a conference sponsored by the Serbian Evangelical Conference that promoted unity among the region's evangelical churches. Each conference delegate received a postcard version of an MCC poster, "A modest proposal for peace." MCC photo, by Kevin King, of refugees receiving MCC comforters. ■

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" (Ps. 24:1).

Communities of *enough*

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" (Ps. 24:1).

Exchange has "opened the world"

Djibrine Banatine, above, directs a Bible school for church leaders in Bitkine, a village bordering the Sahara Desert in Chad. His strong commitment to the church has been bolstered by the new perspective he gained during a year in North America with MCC's International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP).

"IVEP opened for me what the world looks like," says Djibrine. "I have learned not only America's culture but also the culture of the whole world by sharing with other [participants from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East]. I did not imagine that everywhere the church is the same and doing its work to unify the membership," he wrote after his term.

Chadian churches have also hosted 12 North American young people through MCC's SALT (Serving and Learning Together) program, one of whom was baptized in the Chadian church.

"The best part of this exchange is having someone be a part of our society, sharing common ground, sharing Christian fellowship," said pastor Abel Ndjerareou, whose vision inspired the exchange.

Djibrine has returned to his community with renewed energy. As well as training church leaders, he is a pastor and organizes youth Bible camps.

Six other former IVEP participants, who now live in N'Djamena, Chad's capital, have started a library for students called, *Centre Fraternite* (Brotherhood Center). In a country where books are scarce, the library is a valuable resource. MCC photo by Pearl Sensenig. ■

Sharing love and learning with children

Becky Cheng, above left, and Catherine Leung, members of Love Truth Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, Pa., turned their skills, education and love of children into a unique learning experience in the summer of 1996. Part of the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program, Leung and Cheng, who are studying mathematics and social work, both at Philadelphia's Temple University, developed curriculum and planned activities for a 10-week children's program.

"We emphasize cooperation, life skills and organizational skills," says Leung of the program held in the church's basement. Activities included cooperative games, cooking, cleaning and folding clothes. "We also encourage respect for parents," says Cheng.

Many of the children, recent immigrants to the United States, now attend Saturday Chinese language classes at Love Truth. Leung and Cheng also plan to start a children's choir and fellowship for them. Summer Service is a program in which participants from Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Hispanic and African-American communities serve in their churches and neighborhoods. MCC photo by Howard Zehr. ■

A study in concentration—four-year-old Camila with MCC physical therapist Anita Eisenbeis. MCC photo by Mark Beach.

I can do it!

Four-year-old Camila is a study in concentration as she struggles to grasp each of the 10 cups and stack them on her other side — an exercise to improve coordination and muscle control. Helped by MCC physical therapist Anita Eisenbeis, Camila successfully completes the task and lights the room with an extra-bright smile.

Many families in Brazil's impoverished northeast can barely provide for healthy children let alone for those children born with physical or mental disabilities.

When Camila's mother, María, noted her daughter's delayed development, she took her to two doctors in their town, Gravatá, located just west of Recife. One simply told María that Camila was an invalid who would never walk. Another cited a lack of vitamins.

Dissatisfied with these explanations, María took Camila to a specialist in Recife. There she learned Camila had cerebral palsy, caused by a lack of oxygen during her traumatic, prolonged birth. "The word 'cerebral palsy' almost killed me inside," María relates.

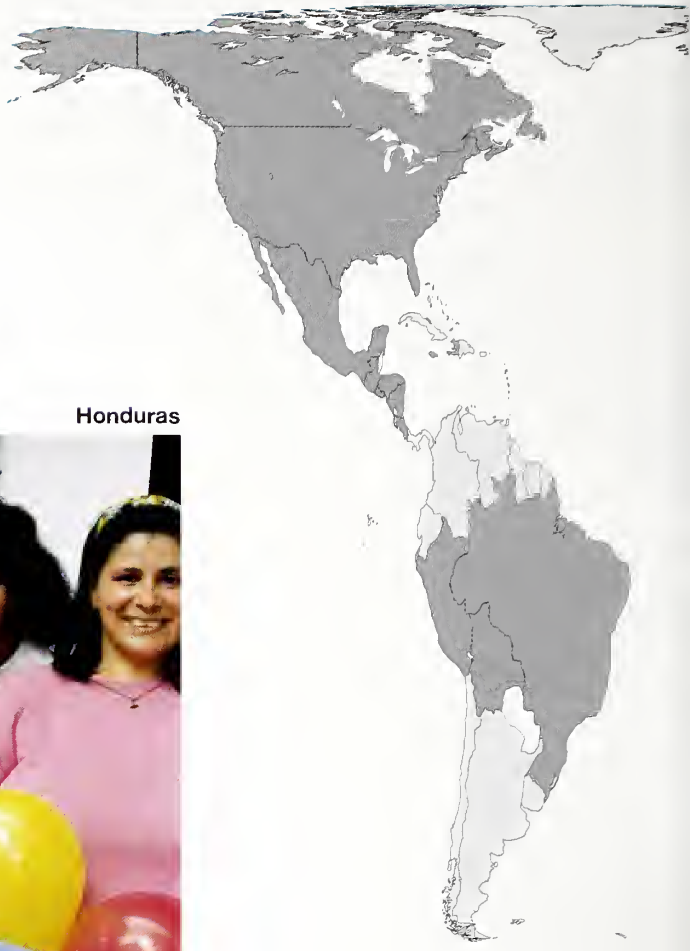
Fortunately, María found help and support right in her own town, through SERC, a rehabilitation center built by parents of children with disabilities. Now Camila is among 40 children who receive physical, speech, sensory and occupational therapy daily.

María has seen her daughter progress. "She has become sturdier. She's not so limp anymore," she says. Some day Camila may even walk.

MCC has assisted SERC since 1991 with grants and more recently, the placement of Anita as a physical therapist. MCC will continue its support through the Global Family sponsorship program. MCC photo by Mark Beach. ■

Much of MCC's work strengthens local churches, schools and other institutions in communities suffering from poverty, conflict, oppression and natural disaster. The goal is always to encourage long-term growth and self-sufficiency. Sometimes this means MCC workers advocate on behalf of people with few opportunities. MCC also believes learning is a two-way street. North American workers return home with insights gained through living in a new culture, and international visitors to North America take their experiences back to their home communities. This leads to growth and transformation for many.

"If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom will become like noonday" (Isaiah 58:10).



Honduras

Darker areas on this map indicate countries where MCC workers served in 1996.

MCC photos (from left to right) by Jon Warren, Paul Jeffrey and Pearl Sensenig.

Servant leaders needed for meeting human needs

by Dwight J. McFadden Jr., Personnel Services Director

MCC is looking for servant leaders—those who seek to give of themselves on behalf of the hungry and minister to the needs of the oppressed. God calls us to be servants, to maintain justice and to do what is right. Responding to Isaiah's call to feed the hungry is a genuine practice of righteousness.

Thirty-five Christian relief and development agencies from around the world met in Oxford, England, June 20 to 23, 1996, to consider their goals for the 21st century. They discussed how to address the human needs arising from overpopulation, lack of stewardship of natural resources, and pollution of air, land and water. They identified an increase in poverty, abuse of human rights of indigenous people and reduction of biodiversity as issues needing urgent attention.

These agencies identified as priorities: producing food, cash crops and jobs; environmental education; management and conservation of eco-systems; waste disposal management; health education to slow down population growth; watershed management and conservation; and increased recycling.

MCC also sees these issues as priorities. In 1997 we will be recruiting for some 200 more workers—agriculturists, appropriate technologists, community development workers, conservationists, teachers, engineers, health workers and nutritionists. The numbers and types of assignments will continue to change and grow. We also welcome discussion with you about assignment possibilities outside of the above categories. Is God calling you to serve with MCC? ■

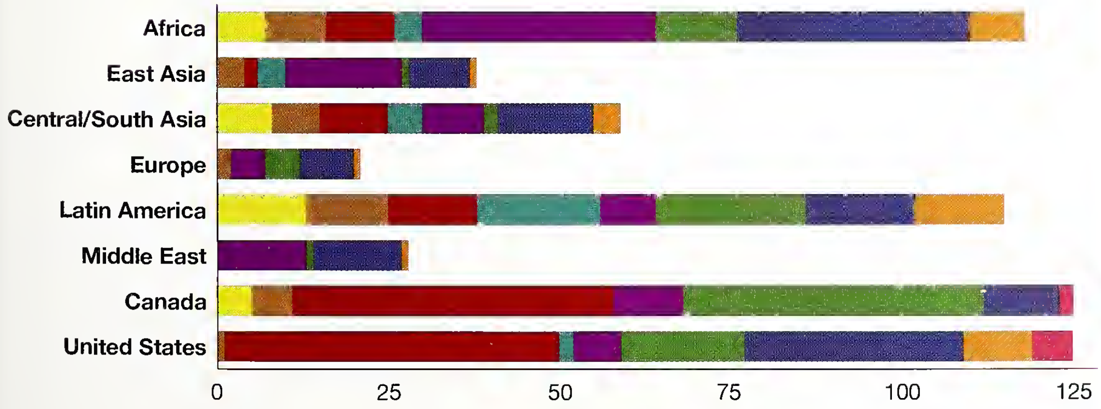
Indonesia

Guatemala

key (with totals)

🟨	Agriculture	33
🟫	Community Development	41
🟥	Economic and Technical	131
▨	Health	33
🟪	Education	103
🟩	Religious/Social Services	105
🟦	Administration/Support Services	137
🟧	SALT Int'l/SALT Canada/U.S. Service	38
■	Study Assistance/Storytelling/Other	8

MCC Service Workers
by vocation and location (not salaried staff)



Personnel
In service on 11/30/96
by country and continent

Africa	**118**
Angola	2
Botswana	9
Burkina Faso	15
Burundi	2
Chad	7
Ethiopia	2
Kenya	8
Lesotho	4
Mozambique	10
Nigeria	8
Somalia	2
South Africa	8
Sudan	9
Swaziland	7
Tanzania	3
Uganda	7
Zaire	5
Zambia	7
Zimbabwe	3
East Asia	**38**
China	12
Kingdom of Cambodia	11
Laos	1
Thailand	2
Vietnam	12
Central & South Asia	**59**
Afghanistan	2
Bangladesh	17
India	5
Indonesia	19
Nepal	8
Philippines	8
Europe	**21**
Croatia	1
Germany	2
Lithuania	1
Northern Ireland	2
Russia	6
Serbia	1
Switzerland	7
Ukraine	1
Latin America	**115**
Bolivia	23
Brazil	13
Costa Rica	2
El Salvador	9
Guatemala	6
Haiti	13
Honduras	6
Jamaica	17
Mexico	11
Nicaragua	9
Paraguay	4
Peru	2
Middle East	**28**
Egypt	14
Jordan	4
Lebanon	2
Syria	4
West Bank	4
North America	**514**
Cdn. Service Workers	125
Cdn. Salaried Staff	106
U.S. Service Workers	125
U.S. Salaried Staff	158
Grand Total	**893**

Your dollars at work

by Berry Friesen, Administration and Resources Director

Consolidated income

Estimated income to all MCC offices—local, national and binational—totaled $64.4 million Cdn./$47.2 U.S. in the fiscal year 1996. This total was up 3 percent from 1995 and exceeded slightly the previous record level of contributions set in 1994.

Cash gifts increased by more than 7 percent and the value of gifts-in-kind such as blankets, food boxes and school kits jumped 18 percent. Income from the thrift shops, relief sales and housebuilding was virtually unchanged from 1995. Non-governmental grants declined by 2 percent and sales by Ten Thousand Villages, formerly SELFHELP Crafts of the World, declined by nearly 4 percent.

Income largely from MCC's church constituency—cash gifts, gifts-in-kind, and revenue from thrift shops, relief sales and housebuilding—accounted for nearly 53 percent of total income.

Consolidated expenses

Estimated expenses for all MCC offices totaled $63.2 million Cdn./$46.3 million U.S., a 2 percent decline from 1995. Income exceeded expenses by $1.2 million Cdn./$0.9 million U.S., thereby adding to reserves. MCC devoted 39 percent of its resources to Ten Thousand Villages and programs in Africa.

Expenditures on U.S. and Canadian programs and for fundraising and support were virtually unchanged from 1995. Activity increased sharply in the Africa, Europe and Former Soviet Union programs due to large shipments of material resources to those regions. Activity declined in Asia and the Middle East because fewer resources were shipped to those regions.

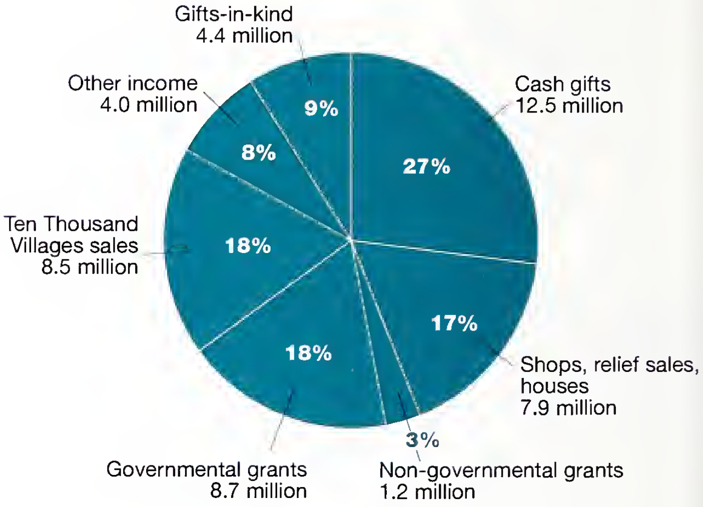
These consolidated data summarize the activity of 12 MCC entities as reported in seven different financial statements in Canada and the United States.

Copies of audited financial statements may be obtained from local MCC offices. ■

Income largely from MCC's church constituency—cash gifts, gifts-in-kind, revenue from shops, sales and houses—accounted for just over one-half of total support. Cash and material contributions were only part of the picture. Untold hours of volunteer time were equally vital and enabled MCC to channel 88 percent of expenses to program.

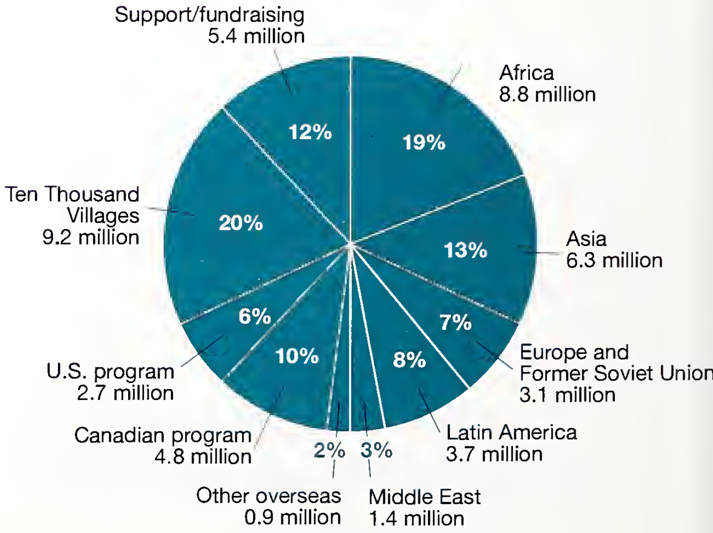
MCC Consolidated Income

Income received at all MCC offices
$47.2 million U.S.



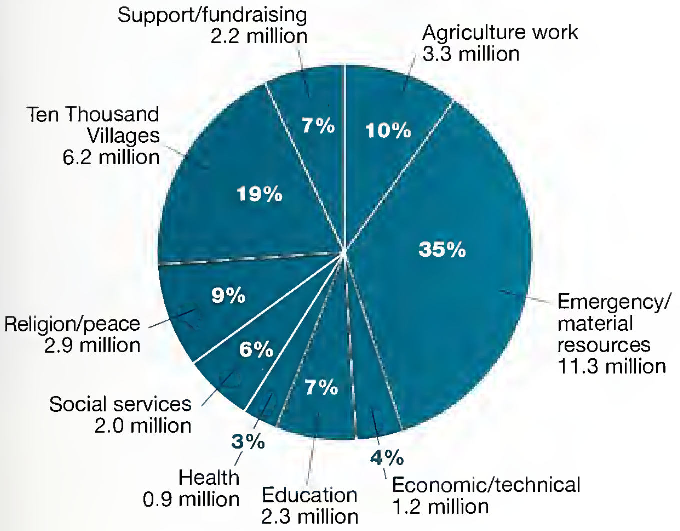
MCC Consolidated Expenses

Expenses disbursed from all MCC offices
$46.3 million U.S.



MCC International Expenses

$32.3 million U.S.



MCC International

in U.S. dollars
for 12 months ended November 30, 1996

We received $32,685,000 from:	
Canadian contributors	$3,203,000
U.S. contributors	8,485,000
other contributors	120,000
grants from non-governmental agencies	1,133,000
grants from governmental agencies	2,083,000
sales of Ten Thousand Villages items	6,191,000
earnings from investments	758,000
programs that earn revenue	320,000
other sources	183,000
material resources from Canadian donors	7,369,000
material resources from U.S. donors	2,840,000
TOTAL income received was	**$32,685,000**
We used $32,388,000 for:	
agricultural work	3,310,000
emergency assistance	1,255,000
economic and technical assistance	1,221,000
educational work	2,308,000
health work	918,000
social services	1,978,000
religious and peace work	2,914,000
Ten Thousand Villages activities	6,225,000
support and fund raising activities	2,209,000
material resources distributed	10,050,000
TOTAL spending was	**$32,388,000**
Net assets increased by	**$297,000**

MCC U.S.

in U.S. dollars
for 12 months ended November 30, 1996

We received $4,665,000 from:	
contributors	$3,817,000
programs that earn revenue	624,000
gifts-in-kind such as food, clothing, bedding	158,000
other income	66,000
TOTAL income received was	**$4,665,000**
We used $4,355,000 for:	
community service work	$750,000
leadership development for people of color	335,000
short-term youth programs	185,000
peace and justice work	838,000
regional offices	597,000
fundraising	493,000
collecting material resources	429,000
distributing gifts-in-kind	158,000
executive office and support	570,000
TOTAL spending was	**$4,355,000**
Net assets increased by	**$ 310,000**

MCC Canada

in Canadian dollars
for the 12 months ended August 31, 1996

We received $23,365,000 from:	
donations, relief sales and thrift shops	$7,358,000
the Canadian International Development Agency	3,219,000
projects that earn revenue [1]	673,000
sales of Ten Thousand Villages items	2,316,000
donations and grants for food distribution (Canadian Foodgrains Bank)	9,799,000
TOTAL income was	**$23,365,000**
We used $2,723,000 for:	
programs in Canada	$1,093,000
assistance to the Kanadier Mennonites [2]	562,000
general administration	1,068,000
We used $20,939,000 for overseas work:	
to ship food overseas (Canadian Foodgrains Bank)	10,384,000
to pay the Ten Thousand Villages producers and get their crafts to stores	2,951,000
to support the relief and development work of Mennonite Central Committee	7,604,000
TOTAL spending was	**$23,662,000**
Net assets were reduced by [3]	**$297,000**

[1] includes the sale of low German books and newspapers for the Kanadier Mennonites as well as reimbursement from projects in Atlantic Canada

[2] conservative colony Mennonites in Canada and Mexico with whom we work

[3] we shipped grain this year that we had received the end of last year

Sitting near a mountain of rattan baskets, CCAP employee, Rolando Reginaldo, finishes another project. His job allows him to support his wife and two children. MCC photo by Kristen Yoder.

Artisans contribute to their communities

For many people in the world, having enough food, clothing and shelter is something to dream about and work toward. Ten Thousand Villages (formerly SELFHELP Crafts of the World), a job creation program of MCC, sells handicrafts from under- or unemployed artisans in some 30 countries to help make this dream a reality.

The ability to feed a family, send children to school and provide health care gives families security and stability. On average, $1,200 U.S. in retail sales through Ten Thousand Villages provides the equivalent of full-time work for one year to an artisan, says director Paul Myers. Through the sale of their handicrafts, more than 60,000 artisans (most of whom work part-time at handicraft production) were helped to move toward the goal of having enough in 1996. Ten Thousand Villages is one of the largest alternative trading organizations in North America.

TEN THOUSAND
VILLAGES

"North American shoppers can buy crafts similar to those we sell in an increasing number of other shops," notes Myers. "But those who want their purchases to enrich the lives of artisans overseas should buy Ten Thousand Villages crafts."

The Community Crafts Association of the Philippines (CCAP) is just one example of how orders from Ten Thousand Villages change lives. Started in 1973 to help the country's urban and rural poor, CCAP's main goal is to assist member groups to become self-reliant and contribute to their communities. Residents of a small village in Pangasinan province are working together to accomplish that. Artisans here weave a variety of items including rattan baskets and Christmas ornaments made from abaca plant fibers. With earnings through Ten Thousand Villages and similar organizations, and with help from CCAP, they have organized a savings plan. The plan makes it possible for them to buy a large volume of rice, which they then make available to members for an affordable price. This volume buying also helps insulate villagers from rice shortages that have plagued the area in recent times. ■

Distribution of U.S. and Canadian retail sales dollars in U.S. dollars

Retail value of sales	**$12,792,000**
Cost of making those sales:	
retailing costs	5,499,000
purchasing crafts from artisans	3,492,000
freight/brokerage fees	826,000
marketing/information	1,061,000
warehouse costs	1,272,000
administration	1,257,000
Our total expenses were	**$13,407,000**
Our deficit was	**$615,000**

The deficit is due to a large inventory write-off in Canada and lower than anticipated sales in both Canada and the United States.

Board faces questions of MCC U.S. identity

Editor's note: *The articles on Mennonite Central Committee U.S. and binational annual meetings were written for Meetinghouse, the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group in North America.*

Cicero, Ill. (Meetinghouse)—At 18, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. seems to be experiencing growing pains.

Questions of identity dominated the Feb. 13 annual meeting of the board of MCC U.S., which was formally organized in 1979.

The meeting was preceded by an event that illustrated one source of the tension for an organization historically run for and by middle-class Mennonites of European descent. Board members were invited to the Wednesday evening service of host church Sonido de Alabanza (Sound of Praise). Worship at Sonido, a large, charismatic Hispanic congregation that meets in a recently purchased and freshly remodeled former American Legion hall, bears little resemblance to that found among MCC U.S.'s traditional constituency. It is characterized by vigorous singing and chanting accompanied by the worship team's electric guitars, drums and keyboards, waving of red and green flags and regular anointing for healing.

Melanie Zuercher

Gloria a Dios! *The worship team at Sonido de Alabanza church in Cicero, Ill., leads worship during Mennonite Central Committee annual meetings held there Feb. 13-15.*

Pastor Juan Ferreras, with English translation by his son, Esdras, in his welcome the next morning to the board raised an issue that proved to be a recurring theme throughout the day (see article on page 14). Sam Resendez, Del Ray, Calif., described the situation as "the issues of immigration, issues confronting mostly Hispanic people who are undocumented in this country but also those who are documented but are being harassed because of the color of their skin and heightened prejudice against 'foreigners.'"

Relocation: The most substantial board discussion of the day centered on possible relocation of MCC U.S. offices from their current home in Akron, Pa.

The discussion stemmed from a position paper entitled "Broadening the Vision," written by MCC U.S. executive secretary Lynette Meck in 1994 at the board's mandate. The paper deals with how MCC U.S.'s constituency, and the issues it faces, has begun to change (e.g., urban rather than rural, racially diverse rather than homogeneously white). The relocation discussion, said Meck, addresses the "integrity of wanting to diversify and be more inclusive while having headquarters in a white, middle-class, suburban community."

A relocation task force of the board brought to the Feb. 13 meeting a rationale for moving, including the desirability of relocating to an urban center in order to increase opportunities for hiring more staff and drawing more service workers from "a more diverse pool of candidates."

Much discussion focused on exactly what the board would be deciding in accepting the rationale. "This is a rationale to move, so doesn't deciding to accept the rationale mean a decision to move?" asked Paul Quiring, Fresno, Calif.

Members of the task force assured their fellow board members that approving the rationale statement was an intermediate step; the task force was not supposed to decide whether or not to move, just whether or not it made sense to do so.

Alice Roth, Elkhart, Ind., said, "We needed a strong rationale before proceeding and then next year have staff bring some options such as locations and projected costs."

"Are we going to accept MCC U.S.

Inside the news

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"Anabaptists in Conversation: Mennonite and Brethren Interactions with 20th-Century Theologies" will be held June 19-21 at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. Contact The Young Center, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022-2298; (717) 361-1470; fax (717) 361-1443; e-mail youngctr@acad.etown.edu.

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The 13th annual Summer Mediation Training Institute, sponsored by Mennonite Conciliation Services, will be held July 14-18 at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Akron, Pa. Trainers are Carolyn Schrock-Shenk, Cheryl Swartley and Dave Brubaker. Scholarships based on need are available. Enrollment is limited. Write Mennonite Conciliation Services, MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-3889.

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The Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University offers a variety of conflict management training opportunities. "Starting a Church-Based VORP (Victim Offender Reconciliation Program)" will be held April 9-11 and Oct. 14-16 in Fresno and June 2-4 in Lancaster, Pa. The Basic Institute in Conflict Management and Mediation is scheduled for Aug. 4-8 and the 1997 Restorative Justice Conference for Oct. 17-18 in Fresno. For information, call 1-800-909-VORP or (209) 455-5840 or visit Web site http://www.fresno.edu/pacs.

Mennonite Publishing House of Scottdale, Pa., began using a new logo as of Feb. 1. The streamlined version of the Herald Press dove will serve MPH, Provident Bookstores and Herald Press.

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The date for "One People, Many Stories: Comparing Mennonite Experiences in the United States and Canada Through the 20th Century," originally scheduled for Oct. 23-25, has been changed to May 8-10, 1998. The location remains Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C. Proposals for papers are welcome. Send to Perry Bush, History Department, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH 45817; (419) 358-3278; e-mail bushp@bluffton.edu.

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Seniors for Peace, with New Call to Peacemaking, Central District Conference East of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church, will sponsor a peacemaking workshop for middle-school age youth and senior adults, April 5 at Amigo Center in Sturgis, Mich. For information and registration materials, call Ed Nyce at (219) 293-3346, Lorie Vincent at (219) 534-4006 or J.B. Shenk at (219) 535-7053.

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Mennonite Brethren Communications, based in Winnipeg, will celebrate its 50th anniversary April 12-13 by officially launching a new outreach direction called Family Life Network. Best known for its evangelistic radio programs, MBC will continue with this but will also diversify into TV, videos, books and other written resources, workshops and seminars and the Internet with material directed specifically at families and family issues.

with its current model in its current location or are we going to go to a different model, implied in a relocation?" asked Karen Klassen Harder, North Newton, Kan. "I would like to see a rationale for staying in Akron as well."

Donella Clemens, Souderton, Pa., expressed an overall positive reaction to the relocation rationale but added, "Where the statement begins to break down is an unwritten assumption that only in an urban setting can hearing the stories and witnessing and following Jesus' mandate happen."

Emerson Peckman, Chambersburg, Pa., raised a question about staff: "They will be the most profoundly affected. Has anyone asked how they feel?" Meck responded that staff have concerns about moving their families and not wanting to live in a city but have also expressed excitement about the opportunities and exposure offered by an urban area.

Iris deLeon Hartshorn, director for Peace and Justice Ministries, who recently moved with her family from Houston, pointed out that staff coming from an urban area to Akron also have difficulty making the transition, while board member William Irvin, Los Angeles, expressed affirmation for moving to an area more hospitable to minority groups.

The board approved the rationale statement unanimously.

Fund-raising: Identity-related discussion also resulted from a staff request for board action on a proposed philosophy of fund-raising. Wilma Bailey, Grantham, Pa., pointed to one of the document's eight points that calls for encouraging "designated giving."

"This seems to represent a major change from the way MCC U.S. did things in the past," said Bailey. "We have traditionally taken the cue from the people we're working with. Now it looks like we're going back to 'We will impose the projects we want to fund.'

Melanie Zuercher

We are the church together: *Children from the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, directed by Brenda Friesen, sing for the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. board meeting.*

"It gives the potential for an individual, particularly a wealthy individual, to set program direction," she added.

The fund-raising philosophy document was approved by a majority vote.

In other action, the board passed a $4.7 million budget, approved a Memo of Understanding on MCC U.S.'s relationship to MCC binational and MCC Canada and approved a mission statement. Such a statement had been in place but never approved by formal board action.

Elaine Bryant, pastor at Inglewood (Calif.) Mennonite Church, led the closing worship. It will be 100 years in April, she told the board, since the first person of African descent was baptized into an American Anabaptist church.

"Those of African descent didn't come to America by choice, but there was choice in coming to the peace church," she said. "We have united two peoples who have suffered greatly yet both espouse peace and nonviolence. Why are there not more [non-whites] coming into 'the enduring and narrow way' of Christ's way of peace?" *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Board sees faces of changing constituency

Cicero, Ill. (Meetinghouse)—The constituency of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. is changing rapidly, as a series of "snapshots" of Mennonite life and ministry in the Chicago area included in the agenda of the organization's Feb. 13 board meeting here helped illustrate.

Pastor Juan Ferreras of Sonido de Alabanza (Sound of Praise) Church, which hosted the meeting with MCC Great Lakes, told several stories about Sonido members who were suddenly being treated differently by neighbors and employers because of recent media attention given to welfare reform, with subsequent scapegoating of illegal immigrants, a high percentage of whom are Hispanic.

“You’ve heard that ‘Hispanics take advantage of welfare’—but illegal aliens don’t even qualify,” he said. “Numerous incidents of racism and prejudice against Sonido members and people we know are ‘our daily bread.’ As Mennonites, we need to speak out that [such] racism is wrong.”

Melanie Zuercher

Living in the real world: *Esdras Ferreras, left, translates for his father, Juan, center, in a conversation with Mennonite Central Committee executive director Ron Mathies.*

After lunch, first and second graders from the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center sang for board members. Principal Marv Friesen pointed out, “We may be abandoning the city, but God is not. If this city is so bad, why are these children so special?”

Ken and Kathy Roth told about their work with Chicago Opportunity for Peace in Action, or COPA (Spanish for cup). “We moved to the city from a rural Mennonite enclave,” said Kathy. “I had a lot of fear at the beginning, but now most of our friends are non-Anglo. The white Anglo church has no real sense of what the rest of the world is like, so COPA introduces visiting Anglo groups to the city. We learn from every group and hope they learn from us.”

“I don’t think I’ve found any more sin in Chicago than I did living in rural Illinois,” said Ken. “It’s just that where you have more sinners, sin will be more manifest.

“We, the church and MCC, need to be on the offense. We’re on the defense a lot, trying to hold on to what we have. We can learn a lot from the [gang members], because they’re on the offense almost all the time. They know what they want, they’re committed to it and they’re willing to fight for it, even die for it. The church is not that way.”

Near the end of the day, the board heard from “Carmen,” a woman who walked across the Mexican border six years ago, made her way to Chicago and has been living in the U.S. illegally ever since. In words translated into English by Ingrid Schultz, pastor at Comunidad de Fe, a small Hispanic congregation in Chicago of which Carmen is a member, she told the board several times, with emotion, “We have come here to work, and we do the work that people here do not want to do. We have contributed much to this country.”

“These are our Mennonite sisters and brothers,” Schultz said later. “Have we forgotten that we were once immigrants as well?” *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Economic issues top MCC agenda

Cicero, Ill. (Meetinghouse)—The Mennonite Central Committee binational board, meeting here Feb. 14-15, faced issues related to a changing climate for service.

This was illustrated in part by host church Sonido de Alabanza (Sound of Praise), a large, charismatic, Hispanic congregation, and by the traditional Friday night MCC storytelling open to all area constituent churches, which was bilingual (English and Spanish) for the first time in its history.

One of the realities the board faced is declining applications. Both new service applications to MCC binational and MCC U.S., and extensions of current assignments, are down from 1995 by an overall average of 19 percent and 25 percent, respectively. Applications are the lowest they have been in 10 years.

Dwight McFadden, director of personnel services, cited economics as one possible reason for the drop. People are less willing to go into service or stay for more than one term because of a greater push to keep or get back to a job than in past years when job openings were more certain and/or financial need not as great. Students feel increased pressure to find jobs and pay back debts right out of college.

continued on next page

After 18 years as a columnist in the *Washington Post*, Colman McCarthy, a man known by many as the conscience of the *Post*, has written his last column. The Washington Post Writers Group syndicate decided to discontinue the column, and the flagship paper, citing gradual decline in revenue from syndication of the column, which was carried in about two dozen newspapers, opted to do the same. McCarthy is known for writing about people and issues usually ignored in the partisan politics climate of the U.S. capital—nonviolence as a spiritual force, poverty, hunger and homelessness, “compassion as an active principle instead of passive piety,” writes Norman Solomon of MediaBeat. “McCarthy has never wavered from the goal of beating swords into plowshares.”

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Sixty people from the Pine Ridge, Standing Rock, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Lakota (Sioux) Indian reservations in South Dakota, and from towns bordering the reservations, took part in two three-day conflict transformation seminars in Rapid City and Sioux Falls, S.D., last November and December. The seminars were led by Rob Burdette, program coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee U.S. work with the Oglala Lakota Nation, and staff of Wolakota Kagapi (“We are Peacemakers”), a local MCC-supported peace-building group. Much of the first day of training focused on helping non-Lakota understand that Lakota deal with conflict in different ways from non-Lakota. “More than 100 years of misunderstanding and stereotyping cannot be undone in three days’ training,” says Burdette, “but we can begin long-overdue dialogue and build on this opportunity in the future. The road to peace begins with a desire for understanding. A few people have now expressed that desire.” (*Patty Burdette*)

The South Dakota Peace and Justice Center and Richmond (Va.) Peace Education Center offer a chance to "explore nonviolent opportunities": in India in late June or mid-July and in January 1998, and among the Lakota of South Dakota in June. For information, contact Nonviolent Alternatives, 825 4th St., Brookings, SD 57006; (605) 692-3680 or (605) 692-8465.

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The Chronicle of Philanthropy **reports that a recent survey of 188 U.S.-based nonprofit organizations shows the average annual salary for CEOs to be $182,000. Salaries ranged from $921,219 to nothing. Notables included: David Mercer of YMCA, $249,299; Philip Johnson of CARE, $223,213; Robert A. Seiple of World Vision, $143,303; Billy Graham, $135,000; Jerry White of The Navigators, $80,168; Millard Fuller of Habitat for Humanity, $55,000. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)**

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Gift shops at Miami International Airport sold a retail volume of $124,941 worth of Choice Books in 1996, setting a record for books sold in one location. Choice Books has had racks in the Miami airport since 1986. About 10 percent of Choice Books sold there are in Spanish. Overall, Choice Books sold 1.8 million volumes in 1996, a 14 percent increase over 1995. Choice Books, a Mennonite ministry, provides inspi-rational books in stores across the United States and Canada. (*Melodie Davis*)

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The American Bar Association's House of Delegates voted 280 to 119 Feb. 3 for an immediate moratorium on the death penalty. The ABA vote did not take a stand on the morality of capital punishment, only on the fairness with which it is applied. An ABA report accompanying the resolution said that death sentences are applied based not on the nature of the defense but on the nature of the legal representation the defendant receives. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

Much of the board's energy over the two days went into finance-related discussion. Changes in economic realities were at the heart of the Ten Thousand Villages (formerly Self-Help Crafts) portion of the agenda. Ten Thousand Villages is directed by a binational "management committee."

Some board members seemed frustrated with an unclear "chain of command." Dave Cressman, Kitchener, Ont., commented on the irony of Ten Thousand Villages executive director Paul Myers' statement about "increased professionalism" of Ten Thousand Villages operation compared with "the usual pattern of muddy relationships among committees, boards, members, staff, constituency."

The management committee is "a new committee with a new role," said Paul Quiring, Fresno, Calif. "[Ten Thousand Villages is becoming] an operation managed more like a retail business. If the committee is given a mandate for Ten Thousand Villages to make a profit, then [the board] must be prepared for the consequences when measures are taken to ensure that happens [such as layoffs or store closings], or else say we support the organization even in the event of annual losses."

Other members called the board to remember Self-Help Crafts' original service mandate. "This is a ministry to a great variety of people, such as the craftspeople, and customers who come in knowing nothing about Mennonites or MCC," said Joanne Sauder, Grabill, Ind. "No other part of MCC is challenged to have no financial losses."

During the overseas staff reports, Stan Penner, Landmark, Man., asked, "Are we still committed to nonviolent peacemaking?" His concern was based on a commentary released last December by the MCC Peace Office and Africa desk, and a Dec. 1, 1996, article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Both seemed to indicate MCC support for deployment of an international peacekeeping force in eastern Zaire.

Terry Sawatsky, area secretary for Africa, said his statement to the *Free Press* had been misinterpreted. He had been asked,"What would be the advantage or good of deploying a peacekeeping force?" His answer: rescuing hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees being held hostage by Hutu rebels in Zaire.

The board approved sending a letter of support to Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Bogota, Colombia, which has been threatened with closure by the Colombian government because of its peacemaking program that exempts participants from military service.

Linda Shelly, area secretary for Latin America, reported that the Colombia Mennonite Church is now feeling "fairly confident the case will be dropped. The government is not pursuing the case as was feared. [The church doesn't] know if it's because of the international support—they still welcome correpondence."

In other business, the board passed a budget of $38.2 million U.S./$52.3 million Cdn. for 1997 and approved the Memo of Understanding for relationships between MCC binational, U.S. and Canada. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

The ABCs of material aid

Cicero, Ill. (Meetinghouse)—Kevin King, material resources manager for Mennonite Central Committee, gave his 1996 report using ABCs prepared for the occasion.

Some of the more interesting statistics included these:

- E is for Eyeglasses for El Salvador; 2,000 pairs of reading glasses sent;
- F is for Food Boxes; 4,000 requested and 6,402 received and shipped to Serbia;
- G is for Grant, Neb.; a new meat canning site where 3,980 cans of beef were processed in two days last November;
- H is for Haiti; gets the prize for the most Mennonite relief agencies—eight—to whom MCC makes material resources available;
- P is for Poussin chickens; 10,000 donated for resale—profits to MCC;
- S is for School Kits, still the most-requested material resources item (48,345 shipped);
- T is for Turkey; the canner processed more than 10 tons, which recipients in Russia and Serbia consider a delicacy;
- Y is for former Yugoslavia; this region received the most canned beef, 94 tons. *Melanie A. Zuercher with Kevin King*

Staff changes take place at GCMC offices

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—A number of staff transitions have taken and will take place at General Conference Mennonite Church headquarters here.

An interim executive team has been appointed to fulfill the responsibilities of Commission on Education (COE) executive secretary and publisher for Faith & Life Press until a replacement is found for Norma J. Johnson, who resigned Jan. 31.

The team is comprised of Dennis Good, director of operations for Faith & Life Press, and Ken Hawkley, COE director of adult and young adult education. The two will report to COE chair Jeff Wright, Alta Loma, Calif.

Heinz Janzen, North Newton, Kan., has retired from his position as coordinator of Mennonite Men, in which he served from October 1990 through January 1997.

H. Janzen

Reimer

S. Janzen

The executive committee officers of Mennonite Men will assume the coordinator's responsibility until a replacement is found. Janzen will also act as a part-time consultant to Mennonite Men. The mailing address continues to be Mennonite Men, P.O. Box 347, 722 Main St., Newton, KS 67114.

Carla Reimer, Newton, resigned as GCMC news service editor effective Feb. 28. She served in the position since mid-1992 and from October 1986 to May 1990. Reimer has accepted a job as manager of Watermark Books in Wichita, Kan.

"As I look back on my eight years as GC news service editor, I am thankful that I had the opportunity to relate to Mennonites from a variety of back-grounds in North America and overseas," she said. "The experience has given me a greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity in the Mennonite community of faith."

Susan E. Janzen, North Newton, Kan., has resigned from her position as editorial director for Faith & Life Press effective at the end of July. She plans to complete a master of divinity degree at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., starting in September.

Janzen worked as editor of *With* from summer 1983 through fall 1990. She became editorial director for Faith & Life Press in January 1991.

"From my first months as the fledgling part-time editor of *With* to my current position," Janzen says, "I have been stretched and challenged as I tried faithfully to do my part to interpret the vision and goals of Faith & Life Press and the General Conference Mennonite Church."

Integrated VS program name announced

Newton, Kan. (GCMC/MBM)—The Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) of the Mennonite Church have agreed on a name for their integrated voluntary service program.

As of Feb. 1, Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) refers to the long-term program of CHM and MBM. Long-term volunteers typically serve for one to three years.

"We wanted a sense of creating something new and, at the same time, keeping the image the churches were acquainted with," says Saul Murcia, MVS coordinator for MBM. "The new name communicates what we are and helps with the identity of our joint program."

"Using the name Mennonite Voluntary Service stands as a symbol of the openness and goodwill" there is between CHM and MBM, says Miles Reimer, MVS director for CHM. CHM used the same name, in the past, to identify its voluntary service program. MBM's program was previously called MBM Voluntary Service.

MVS will now release joint listings of volunteer opportunities. The listing will be distributed to Mennonite Church and General Conference congregations, Mennonite colleges and others. *Carla Reimer*

Mennonite Life*, now in its 50th year, has reorganized with four editors heading different departments. James Juhnke of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., where *Mennonite Life* is published, resigned as editor in 1995 but continues as history editor along with Mary Sprunger of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Raylene Hinz-Penner of Bethel is arts editor, along with Carla Reimer, Newton, former General Conference Mennonite Church news service editor. Duane Friesen of Bethel and Lois Barrett, executive secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Home Ministries, edit the theology and religion section. Current events editor is Rich Preheim, Newton, associate editor of *Mennonite Weekly Review*, with Brad Born of Bethel. Each issue of the illustrated quarterly will highlight one of these areas. For information, write *Mennonite Life*, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117-0531; e-mail mennonite-life@ bethelks.edu.

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Mennonite Board of Missions, in cooperation with Max Wiedmer of Switzerland, is distributing a video that covers highlights from the 13th Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Calcutta, Jan. 7-12, and examines ongoing ministry by Mennonites in India. The first part of the video, "Assembly Scattered," features Mennonites from Canada, the United States and the Netherlands visiting the United Mission to Nepal; a French group sightseeing at Kathmandu and Pokhara; and tours in New Delhi, Jaipur and Agra. The second part focuses on the activities of the "Assembly Gathered." Following the experiences of a Swiss pastor, an Indian pastor and a former U.S. missionary to India, this segment gives an overview of MWC councils, the Global Church Village, meals and worship. Wiedmer produced the video with endorsement from MWC but primarily at his own expense. He served as production manager for the 1988 movie *The Radicals*. Call Mennonite Media at 1-800-999-3534 to order. (*Minnette B. Hostetler*)

Business Ethics reports that workers in Haiti who produce licensed garments for the Disney Corporation earn 28 cents an hour, while Disney CEO Michael Eisner takes home about $7,000 an hour. A group of shareholders is asking Disney to look into this. (*The Marketplace*)

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Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa., has established an "Entrepreneurs Web Page" with information and study questions related to *Entrepreneurs in the Faith Community* by Calvin and Benjamin Redekop. The page is part of the Mennonite Publishing House web site and is located at http://www.mph.lm.com/entrep.html. (*The Marketplace*)

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The Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute, based at St. John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minn., will sponsor three one-day regional workshops: May 17 in Washington, June 21 in San Diego and June 28 in St. Paul, Minn. Workshop theme is "The Gift of Power in Communities of Faith: Creative or Destructive?" Write Collegeville Pastoral Institute, Collegeville, MN 56321; phone 1-800-436-8431; e-mail isti@csbsju.edu.

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The American Dialect Society, which has been picking a Word of the Year since 1990, picked "soccer mom" for its 1996 word. Soccer moms are suburban women seen as a key voting bloc. The society's Most Useful New Word was "dot," as in "AOL-dot-com." Most Unnecessary went to "Mexican hustle" (the Macarena); Most Controversial to "Ebonics" (also called "black English," from the combination of ebony with phonics); Most Outrageous to "toy soldier" as the name for land mines in the former Yugoslavia. Most Euphemistic was a tie between "urban camping," meaning living homeless in a city, and "food insecure," used of a nation where there is much starvation. (*COMmunicator*)

Mission moves toward merger

Newton, Kan. (GCMC/MBM)—The mission agencies of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) took another step toward integration Feb. 12 by naming two joint administrators for Asia and the Middle East.

Kehler

Lapp

Sawatzky

The GC Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and MC Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) have appointed John F. Lapp and Sheldon Sawatzky to joint assignments. Both men will begin their work July 1.

The appointment follows the announcement of Larry Kehler, Winnipeg, that he will retire from his position as COM secretary for Asia and Northern Mexico effective Aug. 31. Kehler has served in this position since July 1992. He also has been the Canadian coordinator for COM.

Lapp served as Mennonite Central Committee country representative in West Bank and Gaza Strip 1991-96. He will be the administrator for the Middle East and Central Asia with responsibility for work in Afghanistan, India, Israel, Nepal, Pakistan and the Russian republic of Dagestan. He will work out of the MBM office in Elkhart, Ind.

Sawatzky, a COM worker in Taiwan since 1965, will be administrator for East and Southeast Asia, with responsibility for work in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau, Mongolia, Thailand and Taiwan. He will work out of the COM office in Newton.

The move to integrate the Asia program represents another step toward the eventual union of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church. COM and MBM programs in Latin America were also integrated as of Feb. 1. Gregory Rake continues as administrator for the joint Latin America programs, a role he has served from Elkhart since June 1996. *Tom Price, Carla Reimer*

Record

DEATHS

Marie Dyck Burkholder, former bookkeeper for COM, died Jan. 14 in Wichita, Kan., at the age of 82. She served with COM from 1959 to 1974.

Carl Smucker, Bluffton, Ohio, died Feb. 9 at age 84. He taught social work at Bluffton College beginning in 1944, and also served as dean of students there 1958-1969. After retiring, he and his wife, Irene, served as MCC U.S. volunteers in aging concerns.

MINISTERS

Eleanor Beachy is interim pastor at First Church, Halstead, Kan.

Julie and **Phil Bender**, Zurich (Ont.) Church, will be pastors at Hamilton (Ont.) Church beginning this summer.

David Feick was installed as pastor at Hague (Sask.) Church Sept. 29, 1996.

Corey Miller will end as youth minister at Trinity and First churches, Hillsboro, Kan., this summer to study at AMBS, Elkhart, Ind.

Henry Regehr is interim pastor at Hamilton (Ont.) Church until June 30.

John Ryberg was installed as part of the pastoral leadership team at Shalom Church, Tucson, Jan. 12.

Tina Stoltzfus Schlabach was installed as part of the pastoral leadership team and licensed for ministry at Shalom Church, Tucson, Jan. 12.

Kathy Keener Shantz was installed as associate pastor and licensed for ministry at Trinity Church, Glendale, Ariz., Jan. 19.

Stan Shantz was installed as pastor at Trinity Church, Glendale, Ariz., Jan. 19.

WORKERS

Gilbert and **Grace Braun**, Zion Church, Swift Current, Sask., are beginning four-month MCC terms in Akron, Pa., Gilbert as a packer and Grace as an order processor for Ten Thousand Villages.

Lee and **Marilyn Brockmueller**, Salem Church, Freeman, S.D., are beginning three-year MCC terms in

AIMM—Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
AMBS—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
COM—Commission on Overseas Mission
MBM—Mennonite Board of Missions
MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
MVS—Mennonite Voluntary Service

A. Friesen

M. Friesen

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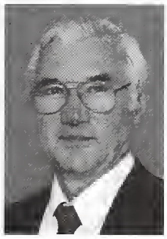

P. Kehler

S. Kehler

Cambodia, Lee as an agriculturist and Marilyn as a reproductive/community health worker.

Jesse Campagnari, Harlan (Ky.) Fellowship, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Evarts, Ky., as an activities coordinator.

Helen and **Henry Dueck** are on a four-month COM assignment in Colombia, Uruguay and Bolivia, leading workshops, preaching and counseling.

Allan and **Maryvel Friesen**, Tiefengrund Church, Laird, Sask., arrived in Paraguay in January for a term of service with COM and MBM. Allan is resource person for the Spanish-speaking national convention of the Mennonite churches in Paraguay.

Orlando Goertzen, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., is beginning a two-year MCC term in North Newton as warehouse supervisor for the Material Resource Center.

John and **Sandra Koop Harder**, Charleswood Church, Winnipeg, are beginning two-year MCC terms in Winnipeg, John as a volunteer coordinator and assistant chaplain and Sandra as a volunteer coordinator and court case-worker.

Edgar Janz, Langley (B.C.) Fellowship, began a one-year MVS term Jan. 1 as an MCC United Nations intern in New York.

Peter and **Sue Kehler**, Emmanuel Church, Abbotsford, B.C., returned to the Ukraine in mid-December 1996 to pastor a newly formed congregation in Zaporozhye as short-term mission workers with COM.

Will Maxey, Bethel Church, Lancaster, Pa., began a two-year MCC term in Ephrata, Pa., as a chef at the Nav Jiwan International Tea Room.

John Plummer, Brentwood, Tenn., began a one-year MVS term Jan. 27 as Menno House manager in New York City.

Abram and **Hanna Rempel**, Jubilee Church, Winnipeg, returned to Mexico after a four-month COM North America Assignment.

Angela and **Erwin Rempel**, First Church, Newton, Kan., returned to Botswana Jan. 27 after a two-month North America Assignment. The Rempels are co-country directors for Mennonite Ministries, serving with COM, AIMM and MCC.

Robert Sawatzky, Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., began a one-year MVS term Jan. 13 as a child-care worker in Winnipeg.

Plummer

Abram Rempel

H. Rempel

Angela Rempel

E. Rempel

R. Sawatzky

Christian Peacemaker Teams will send delegations to Haiti in April and to the Middle East in June. A third delegation to Chiapas, Mexico, is being planned, but dates have not yet been finalized. For information, contact CPT, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680; (312) 455-1199; fax (312) 666-1677; e-mail cpt@igc.apc.org.

• • •

TOUCH Outreach Ministries of Houston offers seminars for cell church leaders and interns across the country in 1997, as well as two youth training workshops for youth and youth leaders (May 16-17 in Seattle; Oct. 10-11 in Indianapolis). Contact TOUCH Outreach Ministries, Inc., P.O. Box 19888, Houston, TX 77224-9888; 1-800-735-5865.

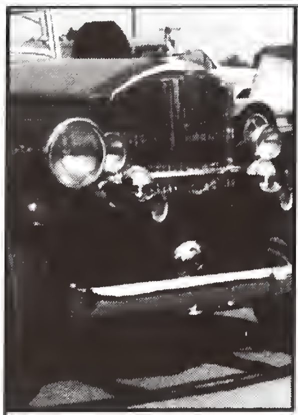
• • •

Bread for the World says the U.S. government does less than any other industrialized nation's government to assist poor children out of poverty. After government assistance and benefits, child poverty in the United States dropped only 15 percent, compared with Ireland and France, where child poverty rates dropped 60 percent and 72 percent, respectively, after government assistance. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

• • •

About three dozen African-American farmers demonstrated outside the White House recently, reports *National Catholic Reporter*. The demonstrators claimed discrimination by the Clinton administration in federal farm programs, saying long waiting periods for loans and outright rejection of black applicants have forced African-Americans out of farming. U.S. Department of Agriculture figures show that white farms have declined 14 percent in the past decade while the number of farms operated by African-Americans has dropped by 43 percent. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

Hesston College announces a full-time faculty position opening in **mathematics.** Ph.D. preferred, teaching experience required, to teach standard college mathematics courses. A position description is available at: **http://www.hesston.edu/academic/deanso/openings.htm**. Send resume and list of three references to **Paul Keim, Academic Dean, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; (316) 327-8206;** e-mail **PaulK@hesston.edu.**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Canadian Mennonite Bible College invites applications for the following positions:

1. A tenure track position in **Old Testament**. The ability to teach in some other area of the college's program (e.g., practical theology) is a definite asset. The appointment is to be made for fall 1997, or as soon thereafter as possible.

2. A two-year term position (1997-99) in **practical theology**. Applicants should be qualified to teach in several areas such as the church and its life, worship, Christian counseling, Christian education, etc. A less than full-time appointment would be possible if desired.

Applicants should be committed to the Christian faith, and in agreement with the goals of the school. CMBC will begin processing applications March 24.

Send inquiries or applications to the **Academic Dean, CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.**

Vice president and dean of academic affairs: Bluffton College invites applications for a position beginning July 1, 1997. Qualifications include commitment to the mission of a Mennonite church-related liberal arts college, earned doctorate, demonstrated administrative leadership and teaching experience. Consideration of applications begins immediately and continues until an appointment is made. For more information see **http://www.bluffton.edu.**

Submit letter of application, resume, and three letters of reference to **Lee Snyder, President, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.** EOE

Canadian Mennonite Bible College invites applications for the position of **admissions counselor**. Responsibilities include recruitment, admission counseling and public relations. The applicants are expected to have skills in the areas of organizing, initiating, communicating and public relations. The position becomes available July 1, 1997.

Contact **John H. Neufeld, President, CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4; (204) 888-6781.** Processing of applications will begin after March 31.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the position of **head printer** at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa. This position is a two-year, full-time, salaried position. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants must have previous experience with offset printing; supervision experience preferred. For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact **Prem Dick** or **Goldie Kuhns** at **MCC Personnel Department, 21 South 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151;** e-mail **PSD@mcc.org** or **GPK@mcc.org**. Applications due **March 25.**

Full-time, one-year leave replacement faculty position in music: Doctorate preferred. Master's degree required. Teach private studio voice, class voice and introductory music courses. Also conduct university choir of mixed voices. Must be familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite faith understanding.

Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to **William Hawk, VP and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801** or e-mail to **dean@emu.edu**. AAEOE. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHINA AND HONG KONG

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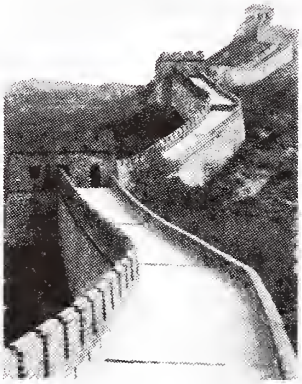

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Mennonite Mutual Aid and **Mennonite Foundation** have a career opportunity for an attorney who wishes to pursue a career in **estate planning education**. The role of this person will not be the practice of law but will be to assist individuals and their professional counselors in estate and charitable planning. In that process, this person will help individuals meet their personal, tax and charitable planning objectives. Estate planning experience is not a prerequisite for consideration. Adequate training and mentoring opportunities will be made available to the selected candidate. Candidates must bring a personal commitment to Christian stewardship in harmony with the beliefs of the Mennonite church. Strong relational skills are essential. The position will be located in Goshen, Ind., and will require a minimum of 60 percent travel. For consideration a candidate must be a graduate of an accredited law school with a commitment to pursue the Certified Financial Planner (CFP), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) and other appropriate designations.

Please fax letter of interest and resume to **Cyndee Blue at (219) 533-5264;** or mail to **MMA, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.**

Reviews

FILMS

THE ART OF SURVIVAL

Surviving Picasso, *written by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, produced by Ismail Merchant and David L. Wolper, directed by James Ivory, rated R*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

This movie is not in the class of other Merchant-Ivory productions, such as *The Remains of the Day, Howard's End* and *A Room with a View*. But it raises some interesting questions.

The film unfolds from the point of view of Francoise Gilot (Natascha McElhone), who as a 23-year-old aspiring artist meets Pablo Picasso (Anthony Hopkins) in Paris in 1943. Thus begins a 10-year affair during which Francoise gives birth to two children, Claude and Paloma, and struggles to hold on to her self in relationship to a domineering, demanding and chronically unfaithful man.

In 1943, Picasso was in his mid-60s and already universally acclaimed as a master and a genius. In the rare scenes of Picasso painting, some of his musing on art—e.g., "A painting is never finished"—are moving and profound.

Warner Brothers

Struggle for self: *Anthony Hopkins and Natascha McElhone*

In his personal life, however, Picasso was arrogant, selfish and childish. Other women from his past thread through the film—Marie Therese (Susannah Harker), who spends her life waiting for the crumbs that fall from her "master's" weekly visits; Dora Maar (Julianne Moore), driven over the edge of sanity by Picasso's infidelity and desertion; Picasso's insane Russian wife, Olga (Jane Lapotaire), the mother of son Paulo; and finally, Jacqueline (Diane Venora), with whom Picasso was having an affair when Francoise finally gathered up the strength to leave him. In addition, Picasso treats faithful friends badly, spoils Paulo while telling him he's worthless and gleefully toys with art buyers and other hangers-on.

Although it's difficult to tell why these women put up with so much from Picasso for so long, there's no doubt he was a complex personality—a brief, sweet scene with the artist Matisse (Joss Ackland) shows a Picasso who honors and acknowledges genius (in a man) equal to his own.

Surviving Picasso is beautifully and richly filmed, full of the color and contrast found in many of Picasso's paintings. Ultimately it leaves the viewer with a new perspective on an art icon and much to ponder about what makes great art and great artists.

THE POWER OF LOVE

Shine, *written by Jan Sardi, produced by Jane Scott, directed by Scott Hicks, rated PG-13*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher

Nominated for several Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Actor (Geoffrey Rush), *Shine* is a true story about the power of love.

It's a power both stifling and life-giving. Young David Helfgott (Rush; played as a child by Alex Rafalowicz) has an astounding gift for playing the piano, which his father, Peter (Armin Mueller-Stahl, nominated for Best Supporting Actor), recognizes and affirms. Peter wants his son to win competitions, which he does, eventually attracting attention across Australia. David is considered a national treasure, and some rich folks raise money to send him to study in America. But Peter, a Polish Jewish emigre who lost his family in the Holocaust, does not want the family split apart and refuses to let David go.

David eventually wins a scholarship to the Royal College of Music and defies his father to go off to London, causing Peter to cut him off. After a particularly stirring performance of a Rachmaninoff piano concerto, David suffers a total breakdown and is institutionalized for years until one day, on a dare, he begins to play piano again—in a bar.

Although he abuses his son emotionally and in some cases physically, Peter Helfgott is never portrayed as a monster. He is more pitiful than evil. His love for David is a presence in the film so strong and twisted that it's agonizing.

Fine Line Features

Long way home: *Geoffrey Rush*

On the other hand, the damaged David manages to keep stumbling across people who accept and love him in spite of, first, his lack of social grace and then, post-breakdown, his fast, pattering, seemingly senseless speech (which as you listen begins to make sense) and apparent non-concept of personal space.

There is Katharine Prichard (Googie Withers), an elderly writer who befriends the adolescent David (played by Noah Taylor); Cecil Parkes (John Gielgud), David's stroke-crippled piano teacher at the Royal College; Sylvia (Sonia Todd), who first invites David out of the pouring rain and into the bar, and Sylvia's friend Gillian (Lynn Redgrave), a Sydney astrologer who sees deeply enough into David to have the courage to marry him.

David's comeback is done in such a low-key way that you almost miss it. The whole film is a gentle story that resists most impulses to demonize one character, sentimentalize another or yank mercilessly on the audience's emotions.

It's a lot like the goodness that shines through when people are willing to love and have faith in each other, even while living with a painful past.

Nanny wanted: Looking for a mature individual to take care of two grade-school-aged children and do light housekeeping. Salary negotiable, minimum $6/hour. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Wichita, Kan., near Maple and 119th Street.

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BOOKS

CHRIST AS ULTIMATE TRUTH

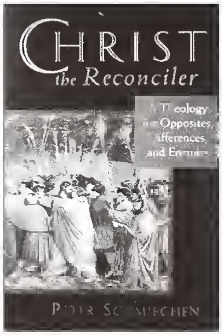
Christ the Reconciler: A Theology for Opposites, Differences and Enemies *by Peter Schmeichen (Eerdmans, 1996, 179 pages, $16 U.S.)*

Reviewed by David Schrock-Shenk, Lancaster, Pa.

Peter Schmeichen, president of Lancaster Theological Seminary, has written an important book. The back cover contains testimony from other professional theologians, such as Walter Brueggemann, who say so. I agree, although as a nontheologian I am more able to catch a glimpse of its importance than fully explain it.

Schmeichen ties seemingly divergent phenomena, from the inability of mainline denominations to evangelize their neighbors effectively, to the internal strife that occurs within almost every North American church, to an inadequate view of the foundation and essence of the Christian church.

He examines eight different models of church that undergird North American denominations and strains within denominations. Although he is respectful of each, he believes none can enable the Christian church to respond adequately to a North American culture based on individualism and pluralism. He poses an alternative view of the church in 1 Corinthians 1-2, where Paul claims the crucified Christ as the ultimate statement of truth. Those who rely on "worldly" wisdom and power to find life, justice and peace will never know the peace of Christ.



"Accepting Christ" means accepting a reconciliation that "binds us together in the face of radical opposition, old wounds and serious disagreements. … It is a violation of the peace of Christ to suggest that a person or a group can be in the peace of Christ and not be bound by Christ with all those in Christ."

Many Mennonites may find Schmeichen's work troubling. Those who bring a passion for particular social issues may feel he subordinates the importance of being "right on the issue" to "getting along with each other."

Yet others will find a fresh theological basis for current manifestations of the historical Mennonite peace position. Those involved in victim offender reconciliation programs, community mediation centers and congregation-based conflict resolution efforts will be challenged and affirmed in their efforts.

This book is worth the two or three readings many of us will need to fully comprehend it.

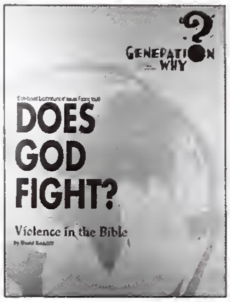
TWO TOUGH QUESTIONS

Does God Fight? Violence in the Bible *by David Radcliff (Faith & Life Press, 1996, 44 pages, $14.95 U.S./$21.25 Cdn.)*; **How Do You Know? Wisdom in the Bible** *by Christopher Bowman (Faith & Life Press, 1996, 36 pages, $12.95 U.S./$18.50 Cdn.)*

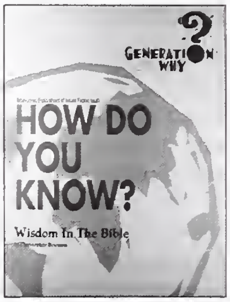
Reviewed by Gary F. Daught, Brandon, Man.

"No sugar coating. No simplistic answers. Just youth and their leaders finding God in the midst of the world's tough questions."

Rather than insulating with pious words, the Generation Why Bible study series for youth intends to invite the honest questions being asked about faith and life. The series also intends that the youth leader become a fellow explorer rather than the person with all the answers. It is assumed that youth will take the Bible seriously if it makes relevant connections and is studied in an atmosphere of integrity. Wow! If only many of our adult Bible studies could discover these essential ingredients.



Two current offerings in the series put these intentions to the test. David Radcliff confronts the topic of violence in the Bible (six sessions). He deals with such issues as war, power, injustice, exploitation and anger. His creative use of skits and role playing make excellent connections with the text. My only complaint—as a person trying to reclaim the canonical status of the whole Bible—is his implied suggestion that Jesus and the New Testament picture of God



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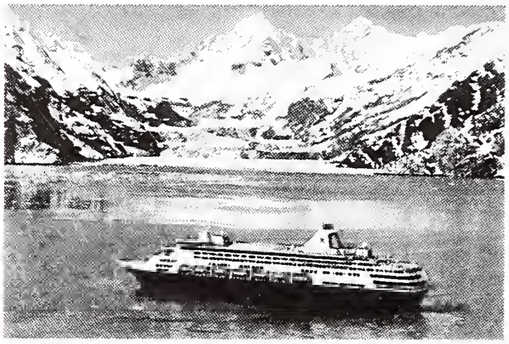

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neutralizes the discomforting picture of war we encounter in the Old Testament.

Christopher Bowman has a good handle on the topic of biblical wisdom (five sessions). Surprising as it may seem, the Bible not only promotes familiar "spiritual" issues, it also encourages youth to use their common sense and seek true enjoyment in life. Although wisdom can help youth avoid much trouble, it is not a foolproof escape from suffering or life's potential unfairness. Biblical wisdom comes to affirm that God is present with us through life's difficulties.

I believe these two offerings pass the test of relevancy and integrity and I can recommend them highly for your youth (or adult!) study group.

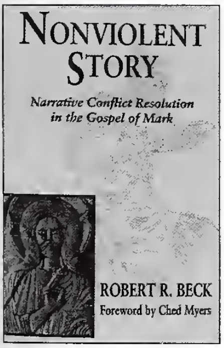
JESUS AND NONVIOLENCE

Nonviolent Story: Narrative Conflict Resolution in the Gospel of Mark *by Robert Beck (Orbis Books, 1996, 191 pages, $16 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Kathleen Kern, Webster, N.Y.

"The Gospel of Mark is a violent story," Beck writes in this book's preface. "It is, if you will, a murder story. It is an account of justice miscarried, in which the protagonist is legally framed. But it can also be viewed as an account of nonviolent action."

Borrowing from the disciplines of biblical studies, literary theory and criticism, anthropology, sociology, theology and ethics, Beck describes the book of Mark as an "agon." The term developed from its original meaning of the athletic arena in Greek culture to refer to any contest between equals—the protagonist and the antagonist.



Just as Gil Baillie and Walter Wink have done in recent works, Beck looks in Scripture for a narrative myth to counter the myth of redemptive violence in our society. He uses Louis L'Amour Westerns to exemplify the latter (i.e., good-looking, moral gunslinger confronts loathsome evil villain and uses whatever violence it takes to vanquish the bad guy and save the grateful town). Jesus, the protagonist in Mark, rejects the violence of his enemies (see especially Beck's comments on Mark 14:47-48) but chooses to confront the repression manifested in his society using nonviolent means, such as healing on the Sabbath, welcoming Gentiles and cleansing the temple (Beck argues convincingly for interpreting this action as nonviolent).

Unfortunately, in taking an interdisciplinary approach to studying Mark, Beck unnecessarily uses the jargon of these disciplines. As a result, parts of the book are hard to read. He also makes the common error of assuming historians know more about first-century Palestine than they really do.

For people studying new ways to think about violence, I recommend Wink's *Engaging the Powers* and Baillie's *Violence Unveiled* before *Nonviolent Story*. However, leaders of Bible study groups might find in Beck's analysis a fresh way of looking at Mark.

Resources

- **For the Love of Marriage** by John M. Drescher (Good Books, 1996, $9.95 U.S.) provides anecdotes and advice on what makes marriage work.
- **Reshaping Your Marriage**, edited by A. Don Augsburger (Masthof Press, 1996, $9.95 U.S.), contains essays by various authors on the marriage relationship.
- **Conflict or Connection: Interpersonal Relationships in Cross-Cultural Settings** by Levi Keidel reflects on lessons the author learned from 30 years of missionary service in Zaire. Available for $14.95 U.S./$17.95 Cdn. from Evangelical Missions Information Service, P.O. Box 794, Wheaton, IL 60189; (630) 653-2158; e-mail: EMQjournal@aol.com.
- **Mennonites in American Society 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community** by Paul Toews (Herald Press, 1996, $19.95 U.S./$28.50 Cdn.) is the final volume of the Mennonite Experience in America series.
- **I Confess! Response to Wrong/Confession of Faith Study** by Dale Shenk and Ed Zuercher (Mennonite Publishing House, 1996, $19.95 U.S./$28.50 Cdn.) is a two-part youth Bible study. The first part focuses on sin, judgment and repentance; the second, which could be used for an adult study, deals with *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.*
- **Enjoying the Presence of God: Discovering Intimacy with God in the Daily Rhythms of Life** by Jan Johnson (Navpress, 1996, $8 U.S.) helps one sense God's companionship in everyday life.
- **Bioethics: A Primer for Christians** by Gilbert Meilaender (Eerdmans, 1996, $10 U.S.) explores a wide range of issues and how Christians should think about each one.
- **Touching the Soul of Islam: Sharing the Gospel in Muslim Countries** by Bill A. Musk (MARC, 1996, $15.99 U.S.) explains the Islamic worldview and themes such as male/female roles, family and more.
- **Understanding the Muslim Mindset: Questions About Islam** by Sam Schlorff (MARC, $2.50 U.S.) provides a concise orientation to Islam.

Locust Grove Mennonite School, with 475 students in K-8, has a part-time employment opportunity beginning in late March for a **director of communications** and a full-time position beginning in late August for a **special education teacher.**

Candidates are invited to inquire by faxing their resume to **(717) 394-4944** or mailing it to **Locust Grove Mennonite School, Attn. Dave Helmus, 2257 Old Philadelphia Pike, Smoketown, PA 17576.**

Accounting—Inviting applications for **teaching position in accounting and business** in the undergraduate college of **Fresno Pacific University.** Master's degree in appropriate field with significant post-master's study required. Professional experience necessary. Applications will be evaluated beginning **April 1, 1997**, and appointment will be made as soon thereafter as a suitable candidate is secured. Fresno Pacific University is a dynamic Christian institution of the Mennonite Brethren church, with liberal arts, professional studies and graduate programs. All candidates for faculty positions must share the university's Christian commitment.

For complete description and faculty application form, write or phone **Dr. Howard Loewen, Academic Vice President, Fresno Pacific University, 1717 S. Chestnut, Fresno, CA 93702; (209) 453-2023**; fax **(209) 453-5502**; e-mail **hloewen@fresno.edu**. Position begins **Aug. 15, 1997.** Women and members of minority groups are especially encouraged to apply.

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Editorial

Connecting peoples

Participating—as best I could—in Wednesday evening worship at Sonido de Alabanza Mennonite church in Cicero, Ill., I felt as though I were in another country. I don't speak Spanish, and after three years in seminary I am much more accustomed to quiet prayer and four-part harmony hymn-singing in worship. On Ash Wednesday (which this was), I look for a more somber service. At Sonido, however, there was loud, energetic singing of choruses in Spanish with the worship team's electric guitars, drums and keyboard, and much vigorous waving of the metallic red and green flags that are a unique part of Sonido's worship. Pastor Juan Ferreras' message elicited much verbal response—"Hallelujah!" "Gloria a Dios!"—from the congregation.

As an introvert, I still prefer "quiet worship." However, despite being tired from a long day of travel to Mennonite Central Committee's annual meetings, I found the evening at Sonido exhilarating. I caught myself thinking, "This doesn't seem much like a Mennonite church." But it most certainly is, and that Wednesday worship gave me a glimpse into the changing face of the constituency of MCC—U.S., binational and probably Canada as well—and the Mennonite church as a whole.

'Illegal': The Feb. 13 MCC U.S. annual meeting, in particular, showed signs of the challenges and tensions faced by MCC and the Mennonite denominations overall. As the report on page 14 indicates, the board heard throughout the day from people involved in ministry in a major urban center—major for its size and for the number and variety of Mennonite churches located in the metropolitan area. Some of the issues raised are probably new to many Mennonites in the "enclaves" of Newton, Elkhart, Lancaster and Winnipeg—particularly that of the racism toward and ill-treatment of Hispanics, who are all lumped into the category "illegal," whether they are or not. (All Mennonites were immigrants once. Are we "ethnic Mennonites" somehow "better" for being white Europeans who happened to come to the North American shores at a time when the United States and Canada were far more welcoming than they are now?)

During the MCC U.S. annual meeting there was much talk about inclusion, reconciliation and, especially, diversity, a word that can be found liberally sprinkled throughout the relocation rationale and "Broadening the Vision" documents that were the objects of much of the meeting's focus. The setting of the meeting, the Sonido de Alabanza church, was a case study of all three words, as the mostly white ethnic Mennonite board interacted with the Hispanic Sonido members. The greeting of the pastor; the hard work of his son Esdras, who led the worship team on his keyboard, ran sound for all three days of meetings and did a magnificent job translating from English to Spanish and vice versa; the delicious cooking and hospitable service of the women of Sonido, who provided the noon and evening meals—all made the Sonido church feel warm and welcoming in the middle of chilly Chicago in February.

Expulsion: I couldn't help but think about last year's meeting of the Illinois Conference of the Mennonite Church, when the conference decided, by a slender margin, not to expel the Oak Park (Ill.) Church and the Maple Avenue Church in Waukesha, Wis., whose open and affirming position toward gays and lesbians in membership had angered many in the conference. I knew that leaders of several of the conference's black and Hispanic churches had spoken out strongly for expulsion.

The face of the Mennonite constituency is changing in many ways. Yet individual congregations mostly are not changing. If they are white, they stay white. As people from other ethnic groups join the Mennonite church, they form new congregations instead of joining existing ones where they often do not feel welcome or included.

Probably the most valuable thing that happened to me at the MCC annual meetings was that Wednesday night worship service. I didn't sing as loudly or move as energetically as the people around me, but I knew they didn't care if I worshiped exactly as they did because we were all there for the same reason: to praise God. I learned that diversity isn't nearly as scary a thing as I imagined it to be before experiencing it.

Maybe MCC needs to connect people within our own North American Mennonite congregations, more than once a year. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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DOES OUR MONEY GO TO MISSION?

Prologue

As we reach the end of Lent and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus, let us examine ourselves and renew our commitment to walk in the way of our Lord.

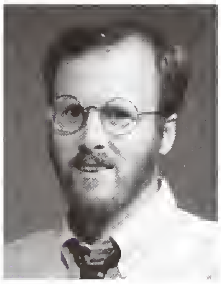
That walk is one we do together as churches, and it involves reaching out to our neighbors, as Jesus encouraged his followers to do.

In this issue we look at how congregations do and don't follow even their own mission statements. Ray Bowman and Eddy Hall encourage us to match our ideals with how we spend our money (page 3). In other words, we should walk our talk.

Lynn Miller opens our eyes to the experiences of people in the neighborhood in Chicago where he serves with Mennonite Voluntary Service (page 6). Read his call for help and pray about it in your own church or prayer group.

In a humorous yet telling conversation between Mark and Mick (page 8), Bill Hallsted points out the many ways we take what our churches do for granted.

A life often speaks louder than words. Reuben Ayala (page 11) has experienced God's grace in a powerful way. Having been in prison before becoming a Christian, he now reaches out to prisoners and to many others with the good news.



J.B. Miller offers tips for finding a good financial adviser (page 12).

May you and your church experience the power of Christ's resurrection. *gh*

Next issue: Dying and grieving

Cover: Design by John Hiebert

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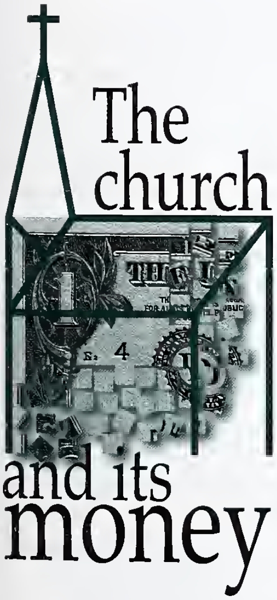
PUT YOUR CHURCH'S MONEY WHERE ITS MISSION STATEMENT IS

How a congregation budgets its money does not always fit its mission statement.

Ray Bowman and Eddy Hall

Of all the church mission statements I've read—and I've read many—I (Ray) have never read a bad one. I've never read a mission statement that says, "We want to be a self-serving church, focusing only on our own needs and ignoring the needs of those around us." Yet a church that would never dream of saying this in its mission statement often says something close to it in the document that probably more than any other reveals its real priorities—its budget.



A Christian church in the Northwest adopted one of the strongest mission statements I have ever read. Among many other good things, it said, "We are committed to helping people discover, refine and use their spiritual gifts. ... To reach as many people as possible ... we commit ourselves to a multiple offense in evangelism. ... We believe people experience spiritual growth when they are entrusted with specific ministry tasks and given the responsibility to accomplish them. ... We are committed to a stewardship focus that emphasizes others, not selfish interests."

When I got to the church to begin my consulting work I asked the pastor, "What are you doing to carry out these wonderful statements?"

The pastor could point to almost nothing the church as a whole was doing to carry out its good intentions. Though this church claimed to be committed to equipping people for evangelism, they offered no evangelism training. They said they wanted to help people develop and use their spiritual gifts, but they had no specific way to help people identify or test their gifts.

Among the most telling signs was their spending. While the church said they wanted their stewardship to emphasize others, not selfish interests, they were spending 87 percent of their budget on institutional maintenance (facilities, staff and operations) and only 13 percent on ministry to others. Only 2.5 percent was going toward meeting the needs of people in the local community. This church was not putting its money where its mission statement was.

It wasn't always this way: A few weeks ago in a group where we were

While the church said they wanted their stewardship to emphasize others, not selfish interests, they were spending 87 percent of their budget on institutional maintenance (facilities, staff and operations) and only 13 percent on ministry to others. Only 2.5 percent was going toward meeting the needs of people in the local community.

The church
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money

studying the church of Acts, I (Eddy) listed six categories of church spending, then asked group members to rank them according to how much their local church spent on each category. I then asked them to rank these same spending priorities for the New Testament church.

The spending priorities in the two lists were almost opposite. The contemporary church spent most of its money on buildings and professional staff. For the New Testament church, "meeting the financial needs of people" topped the list, and "facilities" fell to the bottom; New Testament congregations neither owned nor rented buildings.

At the time of the Reformation, this priority on meeting the financial needs of people was still largely intact. John Calvin reflected the prevailing practice of the time by advocating that one-fourth of all church income go to the poor in the congregation and one-fourth to others in need outside the church. Fully one-half of the church's income was to go to those in financial need (Larry Woiwode, "A Conversation with Larry Woiwode," interview by Harold Fickett, *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion*, Spring 1994).

Most churches today spend less than 3 percent of their income on these two categories combined (the needy within the congregation and the needy in the surrounding community)—a far cry from the 50 percent advocated by Calvin and an even higher percentage practiced by the New Testament church. Is it any wonder that so many non-Christians view today's church as just one more self-serving institution, another special interest group, rather than a community of faith that actively demonstrates mind-boggling love?

Customers or servants? Many North American churchgoers see themselves as customers. In exchange for what they give to their churches, they receive certain services. The church's primary purpose, they feel, is to meet their needs. When most of the members of a church see themselves as customers, this cannot help but be reflected in the church's budget.

Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant … just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:26-28 NRSV). We are not to come to the church as customers. Rather we are to come together to encourage and equip and build one another up so that we can then go out, serving as the hands and feet of Jesus in a hurting world. When a church really believes that, it will show up not only in its mission statement but also in its actions—and in its spending.

If we want to break out of a customer mind-set and become a servant people, our first step should be again to adopt as the church's financial priority the New Testament standard that we will never allow a financial need within the local body of believers go unmet (Acts 4:34). We need to face up to the biblical truth that if we ignore financial needs within our own congregations, God's love is not in us (1 John 3:17). We must learn practical, sensitive ways to detect financial needs within the congregation and compassionate ways to meet those needs that affirm dignity and build community.

Second, we can look beyond the boundaries of the congregation to those in need in the surrounding community. During the first three centuries of the church's history, poverty was often eradicated in the vicinity of the churches. Why? Because every Christian "was expected to seek out, street by street, the poorest dwellings of strangers, with the result that the Christians spent more money in the streets than the followers of other religions spent in their temples" (Eberhard Arnold, *The Early Christians*, Baker Books, 1979). As government assistance for the poor is being cut, our churches have a great opportunity to reclaim this aspect of our calling.

Third, the church can encourage and equip its members to discover what ministries God is calling them to do, then actively support them as they join existing ministries or launch new ones. Many of these ministries will go beyond traditional church programs. They will be shaped by the varied needs of the people in the communities where God has placed us. And they will take money.

The creative possibilities are endless. At a Baptist church in Brewster, N.Y., I (Ray) discovered guests in many homes: displaced persons, runaways, people in crisis. No one who came to the church needing food was turned away, and a house behind the church provided a night's lodging for those who had nowhere else to stay.

A man in Sturgis, S.D., had a burden for teens who were in trouble with the law. Through a ministry he started in the parsonage basement, he introduced them to Christ's love and forgiveness. The ministry grew and eventually took over the whole parsonage. The pastor had to move to a new home.

A church in Hayward, Calif., bought

We are not to come to the church as customers. Rather we are to come together to encourage and equip and build one another up so that we can then go out, serving as the hands and feet of Jesus in a hurting world.

used video games and filled a room in the church with them. After school the room filled with kids of all colors, sizes and ages. There was no charge except for refreshments.

As laughter and play filled the room, suddenly all the machines went off at once. Most of the crowed went into the fellowship hall, sat on the floor and listened to a message told in their own language about a new life. Many spiritual needs were met. Parents came to find out what was going on, curious about reports of free fun and fellowship and the changed behavior they saw in their children.

Turn church spending right side up: In a servant congregation, we will not spend most of our money on providing buildings and services for ourselves. Rather we will use our buildings more intensively than ever before, going to two, three or four worship services or more before we build a new auditorium. We will commit the church to getting out of debt and staying out of debt so we aren't wasting precious ministry money on interest payments. Instead our goal will be to invest as much of our time, money and energy as possible in ministry—reaching out to touch the lives of people with Christ's love.

If you and the other people of your church truly want to be servants, not customers, together you can turn your church's spending right side up again. You can, over a period of years, slash the percentage of your budget that you spend on institutional maintenance. You can multiply the dollars you invest in ministering directly to people's needs. You can become a church that puts your money where your mission statement is.

Ray Bowman, Larkspur, Colo., and Eddy Hall, Goessel, Kan., are church consultants who help congregations fulfill their ministry potential through integrated planning of facilities, finances and ministries. Most of this article is adapted from When Not To Build: An Architect's Unconventional Wisdom for the Growing Church *(Baker 1992) and* When Not To Borrow: Unconventional Financial Wisdom to Set Your Church Free *(Baker 1996), both by Ray Bowman with Eddy Hall.*

A HIGH-EFFICIENCY CHURCH

Joseph Higginbotham

Unlike the "church-growth models" that can be examined, taught, copied and duplicated, the high-efficiency church has little to do with form, structure and methodology. Becoming a high-efficiency church has to do with thinking differently about the church.

Instead of starting with "what we don't have," e.g., greater attendance, bigger buildings, more staff, the high-efficiency church starts with "what we have," that is, what God has already sown. Becoming a high-efficiency church starts with an inventory, not a wish list. Becoming a high-efficiency church starts with the presupposition that a sovereign God has equipped (or handicapped) us with exactly what God wants us to have and that we cannot expect God to give us more until we have been faithful and efficient with what God has already sown.

What has God sown in your church? Senior pastor, why not grab your membership roll and, name by name, work through that list, praying as you go, "Lord, show me what you've sown in this person. Show me how I, their pastor/equipper (Ephesians 4:11-12), can help this person fully employ their spiritual gifts and fully deploy their material gifts for your kingdom. Lord, your Word says I should know the condition of my flock (Proverbs 27:23). Show me their condition."

That's a high-efficiency prayer brought on by high-efficiency thinking. If the Lord brings nothing to mind about some of your members, perhaps God wants you to schedule a meeting. When you don't know what gifts—spiritual and material—a member can contribute, why not ask? That's high-efficiency.

Joseph Higginbotham lives in Lexington, Ky.

THE BAD NEWS ABOUT CHICAGO

Lynn A. Miller

When I first met Ruthie Phillips last February she was living in her kitchen, sitting in the dark in a folding chair in front of the red glow of a kitchen stove that had no oven door. Actually that wasn't a problem; since the stove was the only heat in the house, she would have had the oven door open anyway. The problem was the unbearable smell coming from the bathroom around the corner, a bathroom that included a toilet that hadn't been flushed in at least a month and that was so full of solid material that it couldn't be flushed even if there was water in the tank.

The only water in the house during the previous year had come from a faucet in the basement, at least until the valve stem broke off earlier in the month. Carrying water one bucket at a time down the street worked OK until it got to 17 below zero; then Ruthie Phillips just gave up and sat down in front of the stove. All this in a city that has 18 pages of plumbers in the phone book.

The problem is that plumbers demand cash payment in full in advance, and banks won't loan money to people with incomes as small as Ruthie's. Which is why the church I work for here asked Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) for a volunteer to do home repair in this neighborhood. I fixed the broken faucet in the basement that afternoon, and over the next few days replumbed the first floor, fixed the water heater that hadn't worked for several years, put new valves and drains in the sinks and bathtub, and replaced the broken light switch in the kitchen. All this for $242.38. And over the past six months, at a rate of $50 or $100 at a time from her Social Security check, Ruthie Phillips has paid that off.

Utility bills: But Ruthie's problems are not over. Sometime soon we are told the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 will kick in, and this neighborhood is going to lose almost half its income. As a result, Ruthie's children and grandchildren, who live in this and other neighborhoods in which there are no jobs, are going to find it much harder to pay the rent and utility bills in their small apartments, and some of them are going to come home to live. Which is going to make Ruthie's house even more crowded and her income even smaller. And I wonder how long it will be before I find another Ruthie Phillips living in the dark in front of her kitchen stove.

It's time to get business back into the city, but not just any business. This neighborhood needs a manufacturing business that hires people who live in this neighborhood.

What is the solution? More government programs? I doubt it. By actual count, 65 percent of the money designated for fighting poverty in this city never gets to the poor. It is eaten up by administrative costs, primarily the salaries and benefits of those who provide the services and live in the suburbs. Who would want to eliminate poverty and kill this goose that lays those golden eggs? Besides, poverty makes way too good a campaign issue to do anything effective about it.

How about more MVSers? That would help. There are lots of neighborhoods in this and other cities that have these kinds of immediate needs and need this kind of help. But fixing Ruthie's plumbing didn't fix her problems. The problems she has don't come from a lack of government money or volunteers.

Ruthie's problems come from the lack of valuable jobs in this neighborhood. She and her children and her grandchildren are poor because they have no valuable work that they can get to in the morning. Oh, there is training for warehousing jobs, but the warehouses are downstate 35 miles, where the freeways cross, and the trains don't go there. And there are $5/hour "Mac" jobs downtown, but by the time the Internal Revenue Service, the state of Illinois and the city of Chicago take their share off the top, and after getting there on the Chicago Transit Authority and paying for childcare, you are worse off than when you started. No wonder people give up and sit in front of their kitchen stoves.

The solution, I suspect, is going to have to come from the place the problem came from. When the people with good job skills and good self-discipline left the city to live in the suburbs because they didn't want to live next to "those" people, the companies they worked for soon followed, for good reasons. Security costs rose, city taxes rose, and it made good business sense to move to where their best workers had gone.

Real jobs: It's time to get business back into the city, but not just any business. This neighborhood needs a manufacturing business that hires people who live in this neighborhood. We need a business that brings money into the neighborhood in the form of wages, and sends out a valuable product that is made here. A business that is run as a for-profit business on good business principles. Not a grant-funded "project" whose PhD-candidate managers spend more time writing more grant proposals than doing business. We need a real business that has real jobs for lots of really desperate people.

Neighborhoods in cities like Chicago need Christian businesspeople with the skills and faith to provide jobs and hope, to bring good news.

The only kind of business that is going to fit this description is going to have to be one that is owned and managed by people of extraordinary faith who understand their businesses as an integral part of that faith. By all common wisdom, doing business here is still a bad business decision. But common wisdom is not the same as extraordinary faith, and I'm convinced that a bad business decision can become a good work when it is done in a business-like way and for the right reasons. This is not a good deal; there is no cheap labor here; we are not even in one of the infamous "empowerment zones." But considering what God through Jesus Christ did for us in our "poverty," it is certainly the right thing to do.

Where are you, Christian businessperson, who understands your business as part of your faith? Where are you, new MVSer? What is your name? Tell me, because I want to go see Ruthie Phillips and tell her that we are going to replace the bad news about Chicago with the good news about you.

Lynn Miller, author of Firstfruits Living *(Herald Press, 1995), took his own advice, joined Mennonite Voluntary Service and now lives and works in the East Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago.*

FIRST RED TULIP

Elda Bachman

Killing frost three days.
First red tulip bowed to earth.
Sun lifted it. JOY

Elda Bachman lives in North Newton, Kan.

The church and its money

WHO PAYS THE CHURCH?

Mark and Mick discuss attitudes toward the church.

Bill D. Hallsted

Mick and Mark were having malts at a food mart. "I haven't seen you in church lately, Mark," said Mick.

Mark shrugged. "You won't, either. I got fed up. All the church wants is my money."

"Mark, didn't your wife have surgery last year?"

"Yeah. She's fine now. Boy, it was a scary time, though. We really didn't know if she was going to make it."

"Did the minister come out to the hospital?"

"Oh yeah. He stayed there a long time while it was nip and tuck, and came back—oh, I don't know how many times. Why?"

"Just thinking. Did he send you a bill?"

"What? A bill? Of course not."

"Did the elders from the church call on you or your wife?"

"Yeah. Especially John. He was there a lot. Why?"

Mike ignored the question. "Did the elders send you a bill?"

"A bill? For what?"

"For calling on you and your family and Jane."

"Of course not. I'd have hit the roof if they did."

"Did the doctor come to see Jane?"

"Sure. Every day."

"Did she send you a bill?"

"Sure. What are you getting at?"

"Do you mean the doctor kept track and added to her bill for every time she stopped to see your wife?"

"Sure. All doctors do. What's strange about that?"

"Is she still your doctor?"

"Of course. She did a great job."

"I'm confused, Mark. You don't want to go to church, because they only want money. Yet the church never expected to be paid for anything they did. The doctor wanted to be paid for every single thing she did, but you don't think she just wants your money."

"That's different."

"Let me pursue this a little. How about when you and Jane were having problems. Didn't you go to the minister for counseling?"

"Yeah."

"Were you expected to pay for it? Counselors get from $100 an hour to three times that amount, you know."

"Of course not. He's the minister. That's part of what the church does."

"How about when your whole family came to that concert at the church by The Four Sons. How much a ticket did you pay to hear them?"

"I didn't pay anything. I put a ten in the offering, though."

"A ten? Five of you went to a concert by professional musicians, and you gave them a ten? That's $2 a head. Even a third-rate concert at the Civic Center costs $30 a head."

"It was at the church."

Mick stood. "Let's leave here without paying," he said.

> ***"The church is the only organization in the world that lets you decide—between you and God—what to give."***

Mark's mouth dropped open. "Are you kidding? They'd arrest us."

"Of course," Mick agreed, "because all they care about is our money. Does this store care whether you're going to heaven? Do they care whether you pray or read your Bible? Do they care whether you're happy? Do they care whether you're living the way God wants you to? Do they care whether you and your wife have a good relationship? Do they care how your kids are doing in school? Do they worry about whether your kids are equipped to deal with societal pressures? Do they care about anything, except your money?"

"No," Mark admitted.

"Who does care about something besides your money, Mark?"

"The church, I suppose?"

"Think about it, Mark. Even the money the church gets—what do they do with it? They give it away. They give it away to start churches or to support missions or help schools and colleges. They give it away to provide food and clothing to the needy. They pay their expenses, and they pay for the programs and facilities that help you and your family, but they never keep any money. They use it for others, like you, or they give it away."

Mick continued, "The church is the only organization in the world that lets you decide—between you and God—what to give. They teach pretty clearly what God says about it, but they make no effort to enforce it. They have never, ever told anyone to leave if they didn't 'pay up.' How can you accuse the church of only being interested in your money?"

Bill Hallsted lives in Griffith, Ind.

Letters

CREATE ONE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

When I served a Mennonite Church (MC) congregation in Illinois, I faithfully read the *Gospel Herald*, the official MC paper. Now that I serve a General Conference (GC) congregation again, I read *The Mennonite* for the same reason. (OK, I confess that I've read *The Mennonite* since my high school days and have back copies from the mid-'60s.)

I have read the *Mennonite Weekly Review* for many years and still do, mostly for the community news of the U.S. Mennonite world—people, events and places familiar and important to us. Now that I am living and working in a Canadian Mennonite setting, I read the *Mennonite Reporter* for this same reason.

The fact is that aside from some community and conference news unique to each of these papers, virtually all the major news articles and features appear in all four papers. I must conclude that in terms of major content, there is only one Mennonite paper with at least four different readerships, to which these respective papers cater in terms of editorial viewpoint and special coverage.

There may be a market for two community Mennonite papers reporting Canadian and American Mennonite community news. My conviction, though, is that two "official" papers along national boundaries for a united MC/GC denomination is not justifiable. A binational church needs one official paper to maintain the unity and to build the identity of that church.

I understand that Canadian Mennonites are in the process of reshaping the *Mennonite Reporter* so that it is both the Canadian community newspaper and the official voice for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Meanwhile, south of the border, U.S. MCs and GCs are perplexed as to how to form an official U.S. paper to replace *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald*. In other words, we are well on the way toward having two official Mennonite papers for the new denomination, published along national boundaries.

Much of the impetus for this can be found in the understandable reluctance of Canadian Mennonites to continue having their official church paper be published south of the border. Meanwhile, U.S. Mennonites are having a hard time reconciling two quite varied official U.S.-published papers, each with a loyal readership.

Why don't MC/GC American Mennonites simply abandon efforts to produce an official MC/GC paper for the United States and ask to make the emerging Canadian paper their official paper as well?

I can suggest several reasons for this solution. I observe that Canadian Mennonites do a good job of covering cultural/political/economic issues on the North American scene as they relate to the church. They do so from the perspective of a minority living with a dominant and indeed domineering cultural/political/economic reality—that of U.S. imperialism exercised primarily through multinational corporations shaping the global market. Canadians have a keen sense for the way their unique cultural/political/economic life is always in danger of being engulfed by the dominant powers to the south. But isn't this minority perspective the one all North American Christians should have in any case?

The challenge in such a proposal for U.S. Mennonites is whether they could deliver a loyal readership and provide financial backing to a paper in which they do not have a controlling editorial interest. But isn't this what Canadian Mennonites have been expected to do for quite a few decades now? The challenge for Canadian Mennonites in such a proposal may be whether it is wise to continue working toward one single paper to meet both the community news interest and the needs of an official church paper.

The more basic challenge for North American MCs and GCs is whether we can find one official voice to give reality to our unity in Christ as a new denomination and to shape our common identity as North American Mennonites—a peculiar people living in the heart of imperial reality.

All this is dreaming, of course. But it would be neat to see U.S. Mennonites throw this ball into the Canadian court instead of lamely trying to produce still another official paper that would also be required to create a new readership. With 30 years' worth of *The Mennonite* in my closet, I hate to see *The Mennonite* go. But since we need to let it go, why not use the opportunity to broaden our U.S. vision and redress some long-standing imbalances in the process?

How can we justify the proliferation of church newspapers that all carry nearly identical lead stories and major news reports? Surely there is a way for one official North American paper to carry provincial/district/conference/regional/national supplements to those respective constituencies. Mostly I am troubled by the trend toward national structures overshadowing our binational North American Mennonite identity. *S. Roy Kaufman, Laird, Sask.*

Editor's note: *See story on page 13.*

ISRAELI ACTIONS UNJUST

I cringe when I read articles or letters that give glowing reports about the Israeli government and the state of Israel.

In the past I too was a "friend of Israel." Several years after the war of liberation in 1948 I took part in taking a shipload of supplies to their young country. I've been there since and have turned 180 degrees in my opinion about them.

What they have done—and are doing—to their brothers the Palestinians shouldn't happen to an animal. In this country we would be charged with cruelty to animals for such actions.

In two letters in the Feb. 25 issue Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was criticized for giving food and material aid to the poor and oppressed Palestinians.

I say thank God for MCC and any other agency that feeds and clothes the poor in the name of Christ. Jesus showed great compassion for the poor and downtrodden by feeding and caring for them before ministering to them spiritually.

What disturbs me is that the bulk of U.S. foreign aid goes to the Israeli government and buys them bulldozers that level the villages of poor Palestinian and Bedouin tribes so Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu can provide more land for new Jewish settlements.

The state of Israel was declared a nation when the Jewish people were driven out of Europe by the Nazi onslaught. Now the Israeli government is essentially doing the same thing to the Palestinians. It seems they have learned well. *Jack Stauffer, Newton, Kan.*

THE GENDER OF GOD

In the review of *What Are They Saying About Masculine Spirituality?* (Feb. 11 issue, page 22), the author of the book is quoted as saying, "Classic Christian theology teaches that God is neither male nor female, but fully both."

I don't agree with that statement. "Classic" Christian theology teaches that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. Jesus is a man, not a woman. Orthodox Christianity does not teach that God was ever incarnated as a particular woman. The Father and the Holy Spirit may transcend gender, but if Jesus is God, then God is literally a man, not a woman.

My own belief is that Jesus was the Messiah and God's agent but not literally God incarnate. However, I'm mystified by people who really believe that God is fully male and female and simultaneously believe that God is a particular man known as Jesus. George Orwell coined the word "doublethink" to refer to the ability to believe in two contradictory things simultaneously. *Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

ADVOCACY VS. SERVICE

Commendations and thanks for the Feb. 11 issue featuring the first 10 years of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Your articles and the editorial are reflections of CPT's work and also provide the challenge to churches and individuals that lay claim to a peace theology and tradition as we realize the minimal extent of our response.

Your article on CPT's delegation to Chiapas , "Between the Army and the Village," is a fine summary. Thanks for this story.

I would like to add that in 1995, I coordinated a group of five CPTers who traveled with International Services for Peace as an exploratory visit to initiate CPT's participation. The constant tension between mission, advocacy and participation was significant in our visit and delayed another trip until this current delegation.

As this Chiapas struggle by the poor has intensified, we need to join in this walk with our North American neighbors. The start of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Zapatista uprising on Jan. 1, 1994, signals the growing distancing between the "haves" and the "have nots." Churches and groups seeking to be faithful need to know that events are linked and often come from the work and power of the United States, which maintains these gaps.

I have been a member of Mennonite Board of Missions' Voluntary Service since January 1989 and am pleased to have learned and shared with many committed folks. In this time, I have noted the continuing stress between service and advocacy or, to rephrase this, the tension between working together (standing with) and supporting (serving).

I also continually face the compelling call to work "in the field." This often translates into an overseas mission focus—a natural summation of the Great Commission. This service mentality and commission continue to provide the fuel driving our work, and I offer a hope that as the violence continues in our North American culture we will increasingly develop the vision to work in our own backyards.

I hope CPT will increase its work within U.S. neighborhoods as we try to understand how we can effectively encounter our own insidious and ubiquitous violence. As we continue this struggle, I hope we can continue to have the fine resources of *The Mennonite*.

Base Christian communities in many of our neighboring countries have a three-pronged creed: to see, consider and act. I have no doubt the last—to act—is the hardest, especially in our own neighborhoods. Keep on this case with my appreciation, hope and prayers. *Wes Hare, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Richmond,Va.*

FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Det Udom, Thailand—It has been more than three months now that we have been living in Thailand, building relationships and reaching out to the Isane people. They include farmers, students, handicapped people, retired elders, homemakers and others.

Because our targeted group is Isane-Lao, and their language is also our mother tongue, we do not need to learn another language, and we are able to move into ministry directly. (However, we need to polish our Thai, which is the official language in Thailand.)

I (Pat) have spent much time in relationship building and trying to enroll people in a life enrichment course (one hour a week for eight weeks). The course teaches about God, creation, sin and repentance, using Bible stories. At present seven seekers are taking the course with me. We hope some or all of the seekers will come to Jesus as Lord and Savior. *Pat and Rad Houmphan*

Burkina Faso—Being a standout in your community is not considered a virtue in many traditional African societies. Most people are careful not to draw attention to themselves. For example, if you move, it has to be after dark so that people don't find out what kind of possessions you keep stored away in your dark mud house. Being a community leader is often considered more a burden than an honor. Don't provoke the jealousy of others, for that only leads to trouble.

Our friend Issouf is not worried about following tradition—or he would not have pursued our friendship. For Issouf, getting ahead is more important than "fitting in." Such an attitude hardly sounds shocking to you, but most Nanerige are uneasy with his boldness. He's already felt the sting of jealousy for his achievements.

There is great social pressure here to function as a community rather than as an individual. To ignore the significance of this and bring an individualistic gospel invites disaster. But I believe that once we get as far as translating the Corinthians passage about the church being the body of Christ, not only will we see immediate understanding, but this concept will most likely be already embodied in the new church to a degree rarely seen in Western culture. *Phil and Carol Bergen*

Called out of prison to preach good news

Reuben Ayala calls the church to be a radical witness to God's grace.

Gordon Houser

He strikes you at first as shy, diffident. But when he begins speaking, you realize that Reuben Ayala feels called to preach. He warns, however, that "you can preach all you want, but if you do not show your faith in your deeds, you have no faith."

He preaches about the love of Christ and Christ's call to be faithful. He speaks from an experience not many of us have shared.

Born in Puerto Rico and raised in New York City, Reuben was convicted in 1971 of double homicide and sentenced to life in prison. He spent 9 1/2 years there.

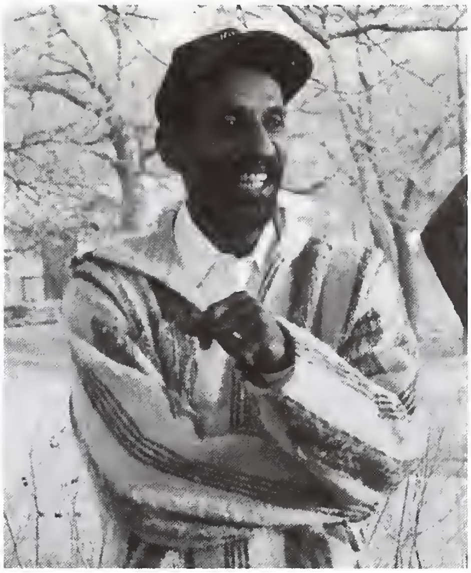
He spent much of his time "in the hole," in solitary, for misbehavior. Then one day a woman named Lorraine Hughes, who visited prisoners regularly and had tried to talk to Reuben, said to him, "Give me your law work."

He had been studying in order to appeal his case. He agreed to give her copies of his many notes. She used the notes to work on his case. In 10 months, he was out on a technicality.

Back on the streets in New York, he says, "I was bitter. But I wanted to change."

Larry Mason, who helped run the Bowery Mission, a Christian ministry in New York to people in need off the street, invited Reuben to join them. "I wasn't even a believer," Reuben says, but he went through the mission's discipleship program and eventually came to faith in Christ.

While there he met people from many places and backgrounds, "Christians of all stripes." He didn't trust organized religion, but he read the Bible and church history.



Gordon Houser

He had been raised a Catholic, but he felt drawn to Anabaptism for two reasons. First, he believed the peace emphasis was biblical, and Anabaptists were the only ones who had remained true to that.

Second, of the Christians he met, it was the Anabaptists who took more time with him, took him to their homes and trusted him.

One man, Matthew Domer, invited him to come with him to visit his Bruderhof community in Rifton, N.Y. The Bruderhof is a communal group formerly affiliated with the Hutterites.

Later Reuben returned to Puerto Rico for a while, then came back to the United States to see if he should join the Bruderhof. In 1991, he did join, and later he married Matthew's sister Emily.

Now he travels often, speaking to high school and college groups, to youth groups and churches. But his main work is visiting prisoners and helping set up others to become regular visitors of prisoners. He relates to prisoners in at least five U.S. states—New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, Indiana and Texas. He connects quickly with prisoners because he's been there.

When he speaks, he calls people to revival. Unfortunately, he says, "often the greatest opposition to voices of change comes from God's own people."

He encourages young people to not only do their job well but to keep their faith with them on the job. "We all have different callings," he says.

"Many of our churches are not radical enough to challenge those around us," he says. Too many are "all form and no substance." But "if we have received God's grace," he says, "it is our duty to help the poor."

> ***"Often the greatest opposition to voices of change comes from God's own people."***
>
> **Reuben Ayala**

Reuben practices what he preaches. Once, he says, he met a homeless woman at a restaurant in New York City. He invited her to eat with him, then he gave her a card and sent her to an organization that serves the poor, one that knows him. A year later he heard from her. She was doing the accounting work for that organization and wanted to open a house for women in need.

Gordon Houser is editor of The Mennonite.

Holy ground

Peter J. Ediger

The cross with its shoes off
stands at our feet
inviting us to
do likewise.

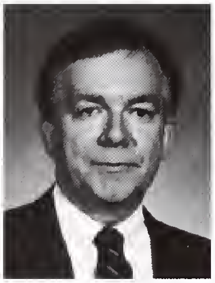
Peter Ediger lives in Las Vegas.

Fiscal health

Find an adviser you can trust

Some tips on finding a good financial adviser

J.B. Miller



J.B. Miller is vice president for financial services for Mennonite Mutual Aid and manager of Mennonite Foundation.

I met a couple at a seminar on mutual funds who told me that they would never invest in anything besides real estate since the only time they had invested in stocks they had lost everything. I could tell they were too young to have been around during the 1929 stock market crash, so I asked them what had happened. They told me they had invested in stocks after getting a call from someone they didn't know who was selling options. While the couple didn't know the salesperson, he implied they could realize huge returns if they would be willing to risk some of their life savings. They did, and they lost everything. Now they think that's what happens whenever people invest in the stock market.

While any investment in stocks is subject to risk, these risks can be minimized if your funds are invested properly, using sound stewardship principles. One of the important keys to proper investing is finding a financial adviser who can be trusted. Just as many of us seek the advice of a CPA, attorney or other professionals, a financial adviser can be an important part of the team of professionals we consult with from time to time. We often think financial advisers want to handle only people who have lots of money to invest. While a select few limit their clients to people who have large sums to invest, there are many financial advisers providing advice to people of modest means.

Some of us may be comfortable making our own investment decisions. At some point, however, we may be overwhelmed by the decisions that need to be made. Examples are when we inherit a sum of money or we have to invest a lump sum distribution from a pension or profit sharing plan. These are perfect times to seek the advice of a financial professional.

How do you find a financial adviser? As with any professional, the best way is to talk to friends and relatives who have experience in using one. An added benefit would be a competent professional who is a Christian.

Remember that financial planning is not a heavily regulated area, so virtually anyone can claim to be a financial adviser or financial planner. Many of the better financial advisers have professional training evidenced by credentials and designations. The most common designations used by people engaged in financial adviser work include the following:

- **Certified Financial Planner** (CFP): To qualify for this designation people must have at least three years financial planning-related experience, pass six examinations and complete 30 hours of continuing education every two years.
- **Chartered Life Underwriter** (CLU): This designation requires multiple examinations and is often held by people whose area of experience is life and health insurance. The designation ChFC, **Chartered Financial Consultant**, is often earned by CLUs who have expanded into financial advisory activities.
- Others who provide professional advice include **Certified Public Accountants** (CPAs) and **Certified Financial Analysts** (CFAs). Both designations represent completion of rigorous education and training.

Never work with a stranger or someone who tries to sell you something you do not understand. It is important that your investment meet the sleep test. Can you sleep at night once you have made the investment?

When looking for a financial adviser, an important consideration is to find out how the adviser will be compensated. There are two basic ways. The most popular is for the adviser to receive a commission from the companies whose products she or he sells. There is often no charge by the adviser for a financial plan, since reimbursement will come through products that are sold to you.

Another form of compensation is the fee-only adviser who charges a fee for services. This could be an hourly rate or a set amount to develop a financial plan. Some advisers also operate with a combination of commissions and fees. This eliminates the risk that someone will use an adviser to complete an elaborate plan, then seek out another adviser when financial products are purchased.

The best way to find a financial adviser is to talk to friends and relatives who have experience in using one.

Finally, when looking for an adviser be sure that all questions are answered to your satisfaction. Know what you are investing in and who is giving you advice. Never work with a stranger or someone who tries to sell you something you do not understand. It is important that your investment meet the sleep test. Can you sleep at night once you have made the investment?

WM

THE Mennonite

March 25, 1997

WINDOW TO MISSION

CELEBRATE:

the resurrection – page 3
faithfulness – page 5
responsiveness to God's love – page 12

> *I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.* *Jeremiah 29:11*

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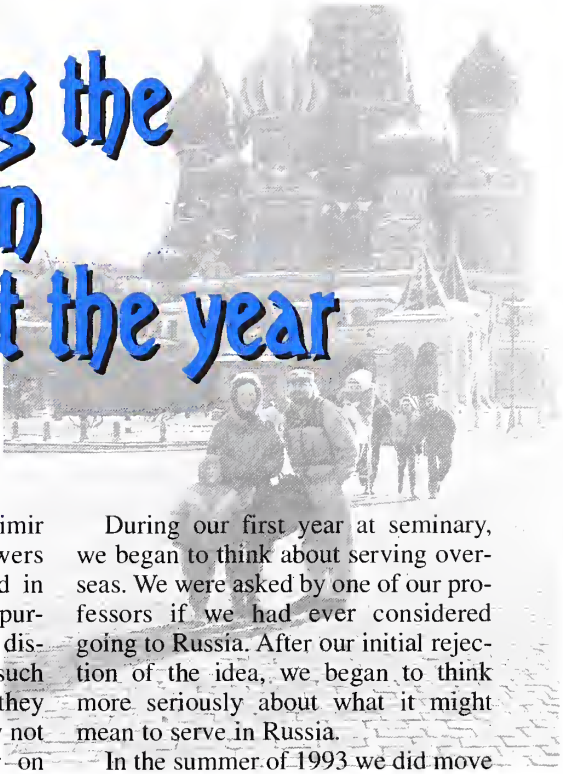
Cover credit: Ja Schroeder

Mission Statement: Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church encourages women to be personally reconciled and committed to Christ and seeks to call forth the variety of gifts given by the Holy Spirit to build the church of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to: (1) promote spiritual growth through Bible study, prayer, other Christian disciplines and fellowship; (2) discern and nurture women's gifts and skills for leadership and service in the local church, the community and the world; (3) build relationships and networks for support, affirmation, discernment, witness, service and celebration; (4) support and strengthen the mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Celebrating the resurrection throughout the year



by Janet Bergen

In the 10th century, Prince Vladimir of Russia sent loyal followers through the then-known world in quest of "the true religion." Their pursuit was not in vain. His subjects discovered an expression of faith of such beauty that upon their return they exclaimed to their king, "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth..."* Orthodoxy was proclaimed the religion of Russia and remains so today. The awe-inspiring experience of Prince Vladimir's subjects with the Orthodox Church still continues. Visitors are struck by a sense of mystery and timelessness. I count myself as one of these.

Six years ago, my husband Walter and I and daughter Rachel, moved to Elkhart, Ind., to attend seminary. There I was introduced to Orthodoxy in a church history course. I spent hours reading, writing papers and integrating what I was learning. Early on in the course I visited an Orthodox church. I found myself interested, yet uncomfortable with the worship service. It was so different from the plain and informal Mennonite worship I knew.

During our first year at seminary, we began to think about serving overseas. We were asked by one of our professors if we had ever considered going to Russia. After our initial rejection of the idea, we began to think more seriously about what it might mean to serve in Russia.

In the summer of 1993 we did move to Moscow with Rachel and newborn daughter Lara. Communication was difficult despite having taken an introductory course in Russian. I was unprepared for the grayness of life in Moscow, the harsh climate, the daily grind of finding and preparing food, the blank expressions on people's faces. I missed the sense of joy I had for life back home, the contact with friends and family.

Gradually I made a new life for myself. As I became more comfortable, new friendships began to develop, particularly through our contacts at work. As we worked more closely with our Russian counterparts, primarily through having meetings in our apartment, I felt more at home. The tasks of life, though difficult, seemed small in comparison to the struggles of those whom we served.

We became acquainted with some Russian Orthodox believers who lived out a radical faith. We also met those who had left the church and sought for meaning in other faiths. Several believers were frustrated with the church hierarchy, yet wished to remain faithful to the Russian Orthodox Church. What was it about the Orthodox faith that they found so meaningful?

Services in the Russian Orthodox churches are long and seating is limited. Young and old stand through services with a perseverance that is difficult to imitate as a Westerner. As a family with young children we rarely were able to participate in the services, nor were we used to the rigors of standing for several hours. I was disappointed we couldn't participate more.

I learned from fellow believers that Orthodoxy is a church in mission which takes the Bible seriously and that the Russian Orthodox Church survived despite years of persecution. These discoveries challenged me to be more open to this church. Listening to the music of Russian choral composers like Rachmaninoff and seeing the painting, "Raising of Jairus' Daughter" by Ilya Repin, kindled greater interest in Orthodoxy as well. What was it in this faith that inspired such beauty?

Orthodoxy stresses loyalty to the tradition handed down by the apostolic fathers through the ecumenical councils of the early church. The Bible is its foundation for faith and life. In the liturgy, the biblical story is retold through the mediums of icon and song. Orthodoxy claims its message has remained constant for over 1,000 years.

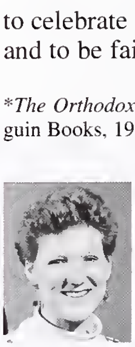
The mission of the Orthodox Church begins with worship. During worship believers experience the risen Christ through participation in the liturgy and Eucharist. Church members are empowered to live out the Kingdom of God in their communities by participating in the eating of the bread and wine. Christ's death and resurrection are celebrated throughout the year.

Orthodox believers participate in fasts with a determination rarely experienced except in monasteries. They are meant to discipline the body and soul of the believer for service to God. During Lent, and particularly Holy Week, devout believers severely restrict themselves and endure hardship as they endeavor to enter into Christ's Passion.

The climax of Holy Week is the dramatization of Christ's death on Good Friday and his resurrection at the jubilant Matins service of Easter. At midnight on Easter morning the priest proclaims, "Christos voskres!" (Christ is risen). "Voyistinno voskress!" (He is risen indeed) replies the congregation in unison. Powerful words of hope in the midst of the ruins of the failed Communist experiment.

In a fractured world we need to find common ground. My Russian Orthodox sisters and brothers challenged me to celebrate Easter throughout the year and to be faithful to our risen Lord.

**The Orthodox Church* by Timothy Ware (Penguin Books, 1963)



Janet Bergen, her husband Walter and their two daughters are now living in Abbotsford, B.C. Janet is taking a nursing refresher program.

Celebrating the righteous deeds of the Saints

by Bek Linsenmeyer

Assign these parts: *Leader, two readers, three storytellers, three players (or storytellers could place their symbol on the set and then tell the story), pianist and/or chorister*

You will need: *coin purse, writing materials or praying hands, a quilt; three seats, arranged at different heights; two large pieces of white fabric—one to drape over the seats before the program, one long piece of fabric to be carried in and draped over this set*

Additional suggestions: *white fabric for table runners, white candles, linen cut to bookmark size to be taken as a reminder to faithfulness*

Leader: *Words of welcome and introduction:* Most of us lead ordinary lives, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing, yet faithful in our unheralded tasks. It is that faithfulness and commitment to God we want to celebrate in this program.

(In a loud voice, at the entrance)
Reader 1: Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out,
Reader 2: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
Reader 1: And his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, dazzling and pure."
Reader 2: For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints (Revelation 19:6-9).

The two readers ceremoniously carry in white fabric which they drape, silently, over and around the set. As they complete their task, the leader continues.

Leader: At times we have not done enough and this we confess. Today we want to celebrate, in story and prayer and song, the times we have given our best.

Counting soup labels

Mary Derksen with Anna Neufeldt

Player 1 enters with writing paper, sits down in prayer, then begins writing.

Storyteller 1: *(begins reading as player is seated)* (Contributed by Mary Derksen, Fukuoka, Japan.) Anna Neufeldt, now 93, was sitting in her armchair facing the open door. Her face lit up as we entered and she rose shakily to welcome us with open arms.

Her interest in missions was sparked on her 16th birthday. At her party a young woman named Clara, who was leaving for China, asked Anna to pray and write. So for some 40 years Anna wrote and prayed faithfully for Clara.

Our friendship with Anna and Arthur Neufeldt began after Clara's death. About 35 years ago my husband Peter stayed in their home in Laird, Sask., after a church meeting. When Peter visited, the Neufeldts felt God was giving them new missionaries to support and encourage. Anna began corresponding with us monthly after we returned to Japan. We visited them in their retirement home in Clearbrook, B.C., on each succeeding furlough. After Arthur's death, Anna returned to her home community and entered the Rosthern, Sask., Nursing Home.

The letters and donations have come regularly all these years. Her active interest and prayers for individuals we write about are always encouraging. "Is Mrs. Kukita well again? Has Mrs. Matsumoto been able to take her children to church?"

Although Anna's childhood dream of becoming a missionary was never realized, she has been a "missionary" to us and countless others through her faithful prayers. Just the knowledge that today Anna is praying for us, gives new strength and a desire to be faithful, too. God bless you, Anna!

Leader: We are thankful for all who have set us an example. We are thankful, God, that you enrich us with the loveliness of friendship. For the encouragement that friends can give, their faithful counsel and their affection, we praise you.

Song: "Bless'd be the tie that binds," *Hymnal: a Worship Book* (HWB) 421, verses 1-4

Player 2 enters with coin purse, sits down and counts out money from purse.

Storyteller 2: *(begins reading as player is seated)* (Contributed by Marlene Schroeder, Newton, Kan.) Her mother had used an empty sugar bowl in the china cabinet for her savings. "This coin purse is where I kept my mission money, put aside for my monthly women's mission group," said my mother-in-law. That small coin purse was passed on to me when her last belongings were given to family members years ago. I have always treasured it because of what it represents.

Missionaries serving abroad told their stories and related urgent needs in the publication *Missionary News & Notes*. Women in the sewing circles read it faithfully and felt a deep commitment to those missionaries. They spoke often of the work of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM), firmly believing that their small donations did make a difference.

When I attended my first AIMM board meeting in Chicago, I realized the impact of their faithful giving. The coins in that small purse supported a great work. As I write my monthly check for my mission group, I wonder if I have the same dedication that they had when they put aside their coins, perhaps using egg money from meager farm income. Giving meant sacrificing.

This summer I hope to pass the coin purse on to my granddaughter, Katherine, for her 9th birthday. Perhaps she can use it for her Sunday school offerings. Passing on traditions can bind us together and enrich our lives. I'll also tell her the story of great-grandmother's coin purse.

Leader: We bring you what we have God. Help us to be willing to commit ourselves, to know that what we lovingly give is, in grace, received.

Song: "We give thee but thine own," HWB 384, verses 1,5

Player 3 brings in quilt, is seated, begins hand quilting.

Storyteller 3: (*begins reading as player is seated*) (Contributed by Elizabeth Claassen, Moses Lake, Wash.) A traveler in the dry rolling hills of central Washington state is amazed to come upon the green oasis of Menno Mennonite Church

Great-grandmother's coin purse

The ladies of the quilt

sitting on top of a hill surrounded by grass and trees, rose bushes and flower beds. As our eyes are drawn to that greenness so our souls are drawn to the spiritual spring which wells up here in the wilderness. For a few women this means gathering once a month for Bible study, prayer and projects.

Sometimes they wonder if their limited energies can truly help in a world that is throbbing with so much pain. They wonder if they can keep going as their numbers dwindle. It is the belief that God can multiply their efforts, as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish, that keeps them going. Each woman brings her skills. One is an organizer, another can recycle anything, another can teach. In various ways each one serves.

Much as the pieces of a quilt together make the beauty of the whole, so these women bind themselves together to serve God with what resources they have. They are:

The Ladies of the Quilt

Someone with creative fire,
Brought forth the design with holy desire.
Someone cut, sewed and pressed,
Selecting the colors her imagination blessed.
Someone drew with steady hand,
The pattern for stitching, strand by strand.
Someone sat before a frame,
For little glory and even less fame.
They sculpted the quilt and gave it life,
Dresden plates needing neither fork nor knife.

Leader: Nurturing God, with your help we will do our best to speak the word and do the work, to be the person in whom others may see your reign coming near and your love revealed.

Song: "Help us to help each other," HWB 362

Leader: Loving God, giver of all gifts, we thank you for the gift of memory, enabling us to build on the past. We thank you for the righteous deeds of the saints, to serve as inspiration. We thank you for the possibility of commitment, through which we can all use our gifts to accomplish your will in the world.

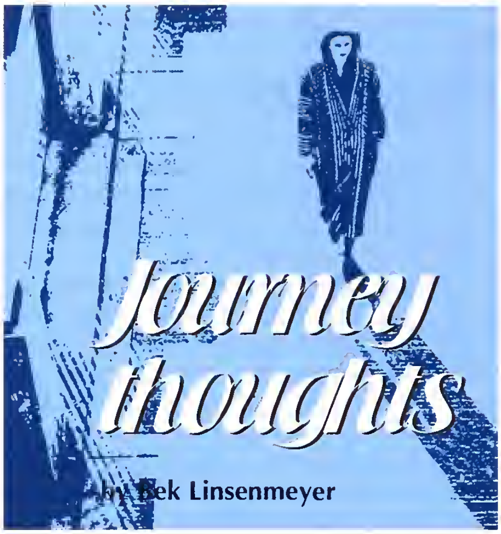
1996-1997 seminary scholarships

This year two Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary students are receiving tuition aid from Women in Mission.

Tonya Ramer is a 1994 graduate of Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., with degrees in Bible and religion, and music. During the summer of 1992 she was an intern with the Ministry Inquiry Program at her home church, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio. During the 1995-96 academic year, Tonya was pastoral intern at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind., and in the summer of 1996 she completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Lutheran Hospital, Fort Wayne, Ind. Tonya plans to complete her Master of Divinity degree in the next year and a half, possibly doing a year-long residency in CPE, and to continue to discern where God is leading her. Tonya writes: "I am grateful for the support and interest Women in Mission has taken in my growth and education at AMBS. Thanks!"

Vicki Biggerstaff comes from Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church in Sioux Falls, S.D. She was librarian at a Baptist seminary for 15 years and is now in her second year at AMBS. She has been active as a congregational leader, as a volunteer with local refugees, in the local Self-Help store and with international students. At AMBS she is a member of the peace and justice committee and oversees the Peace Resource Center. Vicki is a Master of Arts: Peace Studies student and is open to whatever the future holds. She thanks Women in Mission for "their generosity and continuing interest in helping women seminarians."

Tonya Ramer and Vicki Biggerstaff



Journey thoughts

by Bek Linsenmeyer

Several years ago our church had some weeks of naming what we were thankful for. Because of this, I saw more and more cause to be thankful. There came a consciousness of the many gifts in each day—a Kansas sunrise, a purring cat, my daughter's hug, a warm home. Perhaps wanting to be thankful inspired a spirit of thanksgiving.

There was some disappointment: that not everyone was willing to name what they were thankful for, and that over time I so easily lose sight of how blessed I am. God understands our weakness and our need to be called back to that consciousness repeatedly. Although our intent is good, we need help from God and the Christian community to live the lives of praise we are called to in Hebrews 13:15-16, "Let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." This is an act of the will, a part of our obedience to God. If we are truthful, we know it will involve struggle. We also know that in obedience we find joy. Two purposes of this issue are to call you to that sacrifice of praise and to invite you to celebrate.

Join me in celebrating the sacrifice of praise faithful women have lived and made throughout our history. I invite you to think about the "ordinary" women who together have accomplished extraordinary things. Think back on their endless faithful acts, a grand lesson in commitment. Their desire to contribute connected them to something far greater than they ever dreamed.

Celebrate what has gone before, celebrate your part in that past and celebrate your contribution to what we can become.

Bek Linsenmeyer is now in her fifth year as editor for *Window to Mission.* Bek and her family live near Inman, Kan.

Experience celebrations

by Norma Johnson

At a friend's surprise 50th birthday party, we celebrated with humor, good food and serious reflecting, out of gratefulness for his life and to wish him well for the future.

To celebrate God's faithfulness, 52 congregations from the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba gathered on a Sunday morning last June for Celebration '96. The Psalm 89 theme invited participants to proclaim God's faithfulness—as their past, present and future hope. Karen Peters wrote, "I was moved to worship by the very idea of meeting together, by the well-planned program and by the opportunity to fellowship with other CMM members."

Congregations, Sunday school classes and other groups often search for occasions and themes to celebrate. *Jubilee Celebrations*, books 1, 2 and 3, can assist in planning religious celebrations. Each book outlines eight celebrations, so with all three books there are a total of 24 possibilities. Ideas for Thanksgiving, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, Lent/Easter and Pentecost are included in each volume. Some celebrations re-enact Hebrew festivals of Jesus' time such as—"Simchat Torah" (celebrating the Bible), and "Shabbat" (celebrating the Sabbath).

Each celebration includes directions, numerous ideas, biblical texts, stories, plays, learning centers, music and practical tips. They are designed for intergenerational use and can be adapted to various groups and settings including Sunday worship. The themes may also prompt congregations to develop their own unique celebration.

The *Jubilee Celebrations* books are available from Faith & Life Press in Newton (1-800-743-2484) or Winnipeg (204) 888-6781.

"I Love to Tell the Story," from *Jubilee Celebrations* book 2, was used by an Ontario congregation. Each participant could choose two different activities. Quiet time and journaling were a choice at one faith center where one woman chose to spend all her time. A 6-year-old child also chose the journaling center. After a time of reflection he drew pictures and the leader wrote sentences as he talked about how God had been at work in his life. This congregation plans to use other celebrations in the future.

These *Jubilee Celebrations* are valuable resources that nourish the whole Christian and the whole church, unifying varieties of gifts, services and activities in the same Spirit. And that is true cause to celebrate.

Norma Johnson served as executive secretary for the Commission on Education (COE) for nine years. She begins in March as associate pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Currently WM funds lend support to a youth elective being developed by COE based on the Confession of Faith. Release is scheduled for summer '97.

Encountering God's love

by Christy Risser

Jan. 1, 1997, marked the beginning of a three-year term for Gustavo and Twila Ramirez in Mexico City with Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM). The couple, accompanied by their infant daughter, Miquela, will serve in church planting efforts there. A native of Ephrata, Pa., Twila grew up in the Beachy Amish church, but left to explore the world when she was 13 years old. "I wanted to find out all I didn't know," she says. "In five years, I got very messed up. Then, when I was 18, I heard the call of God. God transformed me completely. Now I know that I'm called to be a light to the nations."

Gustavo, a native of Mexico City, had a very different childhood experience. "I grew up in a non-Christian family," he says. "I came to the Lord when I was 18 years old. I really, really needed God. It's so awesome to see how much power God has to change lives like mine."

Through the efforts of MBM worker Bob Stevenson, Gustavo encountered God's love. Stevenson, along with his family, has served in Mexico City planting churches for eight years.

"Just to see Bob's heart for missions and his love for people was amazing," Gustavo says. "He and his wife left everything to be with the people and show them how much God loves them." Now, Gustavo and Twila are preparing to join the Stevensons on the Mexico City church planting team.

'JESUS DIJO'
Venido para que tengan Vida
que la tengan en Abundancia!

Worship at Atizapan Abundant Life Mennonite Church, part of the Mexico City church planting ministry.

Twila served with Eastern Mennonite Missions' Youth Evangelism Service program in Mexico City in 1992, where she met and married Gustavo. After their marriage, the Ramirezes served with the Amor Viviente congregation in Miami and most recently have been involved in the Hopewell (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Both Gustavo and Twila know their work will be difficult at times, but Gustavo says that they believe their goal is achievable. "We want to see people being transformed by God's power—people who are totally lost," he says. "We want to see them worshiping God and in the light."

Gregory Rake, COM secretary for Latin America commented, "They bring an intercultural perspective and a real commitment to Mexicans and Mexico. They have had other options and they are choosing to go back."

WM giving helps support the Commission on Overseas Mission's (COM) church planting ministry in Mexico City.

VIEWPOINTS

by **Jeanne Rempel**

After this article and our March executive meetings, my responsibilities with Women in Mission come to an end. I am going to miss many things: good working relationships with staff, council and executive members; the challenge of using our budget dollars and volunteer hours wisely, traveling, meeting and learning with women all over the United States and Canada; thinking, dreaming and explaining what WM is and could be about; the sacredness of hearing each others' stories. And though I will miss it very much, I remember and share former WM council member Lois Kaufman's excitement during her good-byes. She knew she would finally be able to work on other volunteer projects that she had not had time for before. That time has come for me; I'm excited even though I'm sad. I can't leave, though, without sharing a few thoughts.

The largest issue before us is our integration with Women's Missionary & Service Commission. We've voted to do it, but much remains to be done and decided. None of us is sure what it will finally look like, but your focus needs to be on what is happening in your women's group, because you will always have needs and dreams to connect with in your congregation, your community and the world. Work at those things with all your energy and creativity. The denominational structure will work itself out in time.

Remember the women in your congregation who are not part of your WM group. Because you know the value of being with other women, help them to experience it as well, in ways that work for them, without strings. Help older women feel included. Help younger women find ways to meet together that are meaningful to them. Know that God will continue to bless and use you and your group and all of our groups. And my deepest thanks to each of you.

Jeanne Rempel began as WM president in 1989. She and her family live in Upland, Cal.

Roundtable

by Susan Jantzen

Susan Jantzen, WM coordinator, works one-half time for WM in the Newton office.

Integration riddle

Question: How can the integration of GC and MC women's organizations move forward in a timely manner, yet still give ample time to process significant policy directions?

Answer: This is what the WM and WMSC executives and staff people have been wrestling with this winter!

Good work is being done. Our March meetings in Elkhart, Ind., will yield a plan which your women's group will vote on in your April or May meeting. Look for the mailing to your group by early April. Give thanks to God for the women working on WM/WMSC integration and pray for guidance.

Mennonite World Conference

In the middle of January I returned with my family from three weeks in India. Seeing my husband's "hometown" where his parents were mission workers and visiting Woodstock School which he attended 12 years, grounded our family in that part of Jim's identity. Seeing Indian Mennonite friends in their own homes brought a welcome new dimension to those relationships.

The final week was Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta. Those days in India gave me a sense of strength in being the gathered church.

Elizabeth Soto Albrecht is petite. As she stepped up to the podium on Latin America day she opened her message saying, "I am a small woman, but I am a woman of God!" Growing up in Puerto Rico, her father told her she must continue her schooling. He was forced to quit school to earn money for his family. Just finishing service with the Commission on Overseas Mission in Colombia, Elizabeth looks to Moses' mother and sister as her models. In a country where laws are unjust, Christian faith means practicing resistance as did Moses' mother and sister. It means abandoning a rich lifestyle as when Moses left the courts of Pharaoh.

During the afternoon women's gathering Elizabeth challenged us to make our own path of faithfulness and to accompany each other in strength as women of the church. She urged women to work in any type of ministry to which they feel called, whether cleaning the church, preaching or being a chaplain.

A slide set containing stories of women from India and World Conference will be available from the Women in Mission office in late spring. I invite you to use this in your next year's meetings as a way of connecting with our sisters around the world.

Facts & figures

From the Middle East Desk of Mennonite Central Committee: *MCC Women's Reader.*

Middle Eastern women, despite images of oppression, are unique and diverse in their lifestyles and aspirations. This reader introduces 14 Middle Eastern women from five countries in a kaleidoscope of stories. It is available through the communications department, MCC, 21 South 12th St., Akron, PA 17501-0500. There is no charge, donations accepted.

Winnipeg '97

The General Conference Mennonite Church will have a condensed session July 6-8 in Winnipeg. It will start Sunday with supper and end Tuesday with lunch. This will be an important meeting due to integration decisions.

The women's banquet will be Monday evening, July 7, so check off the women's banquet box on the Winnipeg registration form to attend. We'll be celebrating **80 years of Women in Mission** history and looking ahead to a new women's organization. Join us!

Group annual report forms

THANKS to each of you who returned the annual report form for your local group. And thanks to the U.S. leaders who compiled them and sent them to our offices.

The compilation of all the U.S. group reports will be sent back to each local group along with the new budget and the voting material for integration. Leaders, look for this in early April. Program planners, ask your president for this compilation. You'll find good ideas for local groups in these reports!

YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK

	1995	1996
Feb. '96-Jan. '97 in U.S. dollars	$ 97,526.08	
Canada (in Canadian dollars)	$101,950.72	$91,705.93
Percent of GCWM budget reached	89.1%	89.8%

This year our broader church will have reached over 100 percent of its budget for the first time since 1987. With a past history of "the women" always reaching their budget it's hard to see our giving decrease. Yet we have heard from many of you that the time is ripe for a different giving package for the women's organization and to that we say, "Yes, let's find a new way." This year will move us down that road. We'll do our best to keep you informed. Thank you to each of you for your support!

Window shopping

A Lutheran women's group from Saskatchewan has put together 10 "comfort kits" to help make the terminally ill more comfortable. The nylon travel bags consist of a rubberized bed pad, a large flannel sheet, five soft pillows of various shapes and sizes, a tape player, two tapes of soft music and two inspirational books. The kits are distributed to patients at home, in long-term care or hospitals, and they are returned to the church for cleaning and restocking. Might your women's group begin such a ministry in your area? Contact your area hospice or palliative care coordinator to test the idea.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED
Growing Seeds in Prepared Soil

MAY FELLOWSHIP DAY '97

May Fellowship Day, which will be held on Friday, May 2, is an annual event uniting Christian women in a common worship experience. Sponsored by Church Women United, this year's service is entitled "CWU—Sowing Seeds in Prepared Soil." This service uses the concept of seeds provided by God from ancient times, for both physical and spiritual nourishment. Seed will be used in the service as a symbol of God's seed that survives over the centuries of human existence and continues to nourish. Take home two things: a packet of amaranth seeds (an ancient grain) and seeds of faith. Plant them in prepared soil and both seeds will bear fruit. For more information write Church Women United, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 812, New York, NY 10115; or call 1-800-298-5551.

Books available through Faith & Life Bookstore (1-800-743-2484):

- *The Mom Factor: Dealing with the Mother You Had, Didn't Have, or Still Contend With* by Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend (Zondervan, 1996, hardcover, $18.99 U.S.). How does the way you were mothered impact the way you mother or live in any relationship today? It's a question answered with insight and practical application by the authors of *Boundaries* and hosts of the Minirth Meier Clinic national radio program.
- *Girls and Young Women Leading the Way: 20 True Stories about Leadership* by Frances A. Karnes & Suzanne M. Bean (Free Spirit Publishers, 1993, hardcover, $11.95 U.S.); for ages 11 and up. True stories of young women ages 8 to 21 who made a difference by identifying opportunities for change and taking action. Their many different projects demonstrate that leadership opportunities are as diverse as leaders themselves. To help readers explore and develop their own leadership skills, the authors provide thought-provoking questions, suggestions for leadership projects and activities and resources.

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News

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IC proposes names for paper, denomination

Chicago—The new integrated Mennonite denomination should retain the name of one of the merging partners and its new periodical should continue the name used by the other.

Those were two of the recommendations the Integration Committee (IC) considered at its Feb. 28-March 1 meeting: that the new denomination be called "Mennonite Church" and the integrated periodical be named *The Mennonite*.

The latter came in a report from a subgroup that had been asked to work on a new periodical. The report calls for a merger of *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald*, the Mennonite Church weekly, into one publication for the new denomination by Jan. 1, 1998.

The name, date of merger, place of publication and an editor for the new periodical, all included in the subgroup proposal, are still subject to final approval by the general boards and delegate bodies of each denomination.

Aware that another publication is being developed in Canada by the publishers of *Mennonite Reporter* and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, the IC agreed that both should be considered denominational publications, with consultation and content sharing between the two.

The subgroup report will go next to the Division of General Services, publisher of *The Mennonite*, and to the Mennonite Publication Board, publisher of *Gospel Herald*. Pending their decisions, it will also be considered by both Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) general boards in their spring sessions. If both bodies give their approval, delegates at a special GC session in Winnipeg July 6-8 will vote on the proposals. MC delegates will do the same during their general assembly, to be held July 29-Aug. 2 in Orlando, Fla.

After considering at least five possible options and constituency reaction to each, deciding on a name for a new denomination came down to one question from Ruth Suter, San Francisco: "With whom do we want to communicate?"

The committee agreed that the primary audience for a new name should be society—"the emphasis of our mission," said GC general secretary James Schrag, Newton, Kan.

After that, a name should appeal to "people in the pew" and then to those who work in the denomination's structures, said IC co-chair John C. Murray, Topeka, Ind.

Committee members noted mostly negative reactions to the name "Mennonite Church North America," which had been proposed in an earlier round of discussion.

The committee also agreed that even if other names were used, the new denomination would still be called "Mennonite Church" by most people, both inside and outside the church.

Lindsey Robinson, Harrisburg, Pa., an MC representative on the committee, said he liked the name but asked, "If we have a new church, shouldn't we have a new name?" Co-chair Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Bluffton, Ohio, reminded him that, for GCs at least, the name would be new.

Names weren't the only thing occupying the IC. Much of its time was also devoted to agreeing on a structure for the integrated denomination.

The committee's proposed model calls for a denominational assembly every three years made up of delegates from area conferences. These would be organized into four regions: Canada, U.S. West, U.S. Central and U.S. East.

The assembly would appoint a 26-member General Board to oversee the work of four program boards: missions, congregational resources, leadership and education.

Plans call for the new General Board to be made up of 13 representatives from the regions, one each from the "councils" (African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Native, women, conference of moderators and secretaries), one from each program board and three members elected by the assembly: a moderator, a moderator-elect and a secretary.

The IC sees this new board in place by 1999. *J. Lorne Peachey*

Inside the news

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Service workers speak against fraternity 'fun' / p. 18

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center will host a poetry retreat May 9-11 with resource people Jeff Gundy, Bluffton, Ohio; Julia Kasdorf, Camp Hill, Pa., and Scott Holland, Pittsburgh. Write Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Route 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666; 1-800-839-1021 or (412) 423-2056.

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Vernon R. Wiebe, Hillsboro, Kan., known for his wide variety of roles in the Mennonite Brethren denomination, died Jan. 28 at age 70. In his career he served as general secretary of Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services, interim president of Tabor College, chair of the Mennonite Brethren U.S. conference, member of the Mennonite Central Committee board and tour guide for Prudent Tours, among other roles. (*Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services*)

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***The* (Toronto) *Globe and Mail* reports that no two nations with McDonald's restaurants have ever gone to war. The so-called Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention, conceived by Thomas Friedman in the *New York Times*, holds that countries can only support a McDonald's when they have reached a sufficient level of economic prosperity and political stability to make war unattractive to their people. In early December 1996, McDonald's restaurants opened in Belarus and Tahiti, bringing the tally to 101 countries. (*PACS Forum News*)**

The Hermitage, a Mennonite retreat center near Three Rivers, Mich., will sponsor a series of seven one-day retreats remembering the life and ministry of Henri Nouwen, who died suddenly last September. Arthur Paul Boers, Waterloo, Ont., will lead the first retreat May 19 as a day of prayer and study based on Nouwen's *The Return of the Prodigal*. Call (616) 244-8696. (*Gospel Herald*)

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Want to grow your own Menno Simons tulips? (See Aug. 13, 1996, page 13.) You can now order bulbs; deadline is May 31. Order forms are available from Menno Simons Tulip, Scheepjeserf #5, NL-1843 JE Grootschermer, The Netherlands/Europe; fax NL-299-673397. The bulbs come in packets of 15, at U.S. prices. The tulip—a deep red to "symbolize the warmth of the Mennonite religion"—was baptized at the world's largest covered bulb flower exhibition in the Netherlands in 1996, with water "in accordance with the normal method of baptism" (tulips are usually baptized with champagne).

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Unda-USA, the national Catholic association for professional communicators, has awarded one of its top awards, a "Gabriel," to a radio spot produced by Mennonite Media, the Harrisonburg, Va.-based media division of Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind. MBM President Stanley W. Green accepted the award in Chicago in January for one of eight public service announcements in the "Stop the Violence" radio campaign. In the winning spot, "Silence Can Be Deadly," a woman describes being beaten by a former boyfriend and finally telling someone. A narrator concludes, "Do your part to stop the violence. A message from the Mennonite churches." The spots also address gun violence, child abuse and the link between violent thoughts and deeds. About 950 stations are using the radio spots so far. Mennonite Media previously won Gabriel Awards for radio spots in 1971, 1983 and 1987. (*Melodie Davis*)

Mennonites criticize INS action

Harrisonburg, Va. (MCC)—Two Hispanic Mennonite pastors have joined others to raise concerns about recent actions taken against employees of the Wampler-Longacre turkey processing plant here.

Mayra and Samuel D. Pagan are leaders of the Interdenominational Coalition for Justice, which formed to advocate for Wampler-Longacre employees. The Pagans pastor Agape Bilingual Mennonite Mission, a Hispanic ministry of Ridgeway Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

The coalition, which Samuel Pagan directs, formed in response to a "raid" on the poultry plant.

On the afternoon of Feb. 3, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents, Harrisonburg and state police, local sheriffs and FBI agents entered and surrounded the factory, wielding guns and handcuffs and accompanied by dogs. They seized some 50 employees and eventually charged 38 with being in the United States illegally. About 28 are being held in several different jails.

On Feb. 9, some 400 people attended a community meeting and rally at the Ridgeway Church, where coalition members gathered to protest the tactics of the federal agents and what they see as the targeting of Hispanic people. The situation has created a climate of hysteria in the Hispanic community, says Samuel Pagan.

The coalition is assisting the families of those arrested, helping with basics such as groceries and clothing, providing counseling and prayer and advising them on immigration procedures.

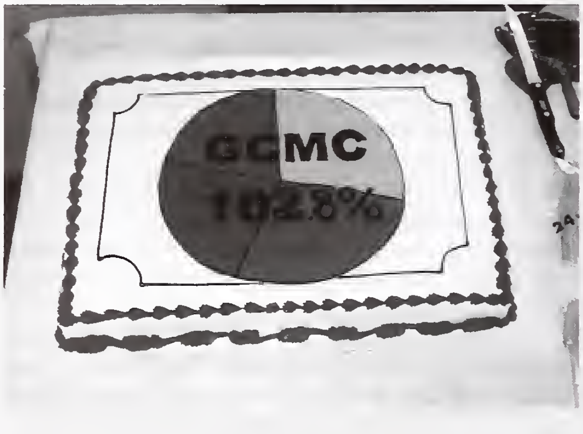
They are also calling for changes to immigration laws that would make it easier for aliens with relatives in the United States to stay here. The Pagans argue that deporting illegal immigrants breaks up families and that the law should be changed to take this into consideration.

"They [the INS and police] are not dealing with criminals," says Mayra Pagan. "They are violating people's rights. They had no proof of illegal activities. These are working families."

The coalition includes Hispanic congregations from various denominations in the Harrisonburg area.

The Pagans moved to Harrisonburg in June 1996 to start the Agape Bilingual Mennonite Mission. Mayra Pagan is supported in her work by the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Service Internship Program, which fosters leadership skills for people in Anabaptist congregations and community-based organizations from African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native and Hispanic communities. *Deborah Fast*

A sweet end to the fiscal year



Dave Linscheid

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—For the first time since 1987, contributions to the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) exceeded the annual budget goal.

Income for fiscal year 1996 totaled $4,389,437 U.S. or 102.8 percent of the $4,268,897 budget.

On Feb. 27, GC staff at the Newton office were treated to lunch, including the cake pictured here, to celebrate.

"We are thankful to God and to the many individuals and congregations who contributed generously to the conference during the past year," says GC treasurer Ted Stuckey. "This allows us some options as we plan for the future."

Donations from congregations account for about 75 percent of conference income, and individual gifts account for 15 percent. The remaining 10 percent comes from other sources, such as estate and interest income. *Dave Linscheid*

Peacemakers at the Palace

Gordon Gray (MCC)

London—On Feb. 11, Joe Campbell, second from left, became the first person affiliated with Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee to be named a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Queen Elizabeth inducted Campbell and some 100 others into the order at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

Campbell doesn't know who nominated him for the award, only that it was for "services to the community in Northern Ireland," where his work spans more than 20 years. Campbell, who is Irish, works in conflict resolution with the Mediation Network of Northern Ireland. He also directs MCC and MBM programs in Northern Ireland.

Receiving the award does have a down side. Campbell, a Presbyterian elder, worries Catholics may perceive his acceptance of the honor as "being bought over by one side."

"But in the end these awards are part of our national life and as such I accepted it on behalf of many, many people who are working for peace and justice, and as an encouragement for others to join in this important work," he says.

Campbell is pictured with his eldest daughter, Esther, left, his wife, Janet, center, daughter Lisa and son Colin.

Campbell's work is highlighted in the video *Ekklesia-Peacemaking: Healing and Hope*, available for free loan from all MCC offices. To purchase, phone Mennonite Media at 1-800-999-3534. *Alison Lyon*

Volunteers find work rewarding

Editor's note: *This is the last in a series of articles about three young adults who applied to Mennonite Voluntary Service in January 1996. Mike Schmidt, Waterloo, Ont., accepted an assignment in McAllen, Texas, beginning at the end of August 1996, while Phil and Marla Schmidt (no relation to Mike Schmidt), Newton, Kan., accepted assignments in Sioux Falls, S.D., starting in October 1996.*

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—After only seven months of volunteer work with the Border Association for Refugees from Central America (BARCA) in McAllen, Texas, Mike Schmidt is intimately acquainted with U.S. immigration law.

As the lead paralegal at BARCA, he has to have his facts straight, he says. Each week, an average of 20 clients visit his office to ask for help in attaining permanent residency status or citizenship.

"I'm dealing with legal issues and the Immigration and Naturalization

The third baptismal service at the Zaporozhye (Ukraine) Evangelical Mennonite Church, founded Aug. 16, 1996 (*The Mennonite*, Oct. 8, 1996, page 16), took place Feb. 23. Eight people were baptized, with Communion following. Twenty-four participated in the Lord's Supper, only the second time Communion has been served in the Zaporozhye church. Peter and Susan Kehler, Abbotsford, B.C., have been working with the church as short-term workers with the Commission on Overseas Mission since February 1996.

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An extremely harsh winter with high winds and bitterly cold temperatures has stretched to the limit the resources of many residents of the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Indian reservations in South Dakota. "Elderly people in their 70s tell me they have never experienced a winter like this," says Patty Burdette, who with her husband, Rob, directs the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Oglala Lakota Nation program. Pine Ridge has been the poorest area of the United States for the past 25 years. Most reservation residents live in substandard housing with little or no insulation and often without electricity or central heating. Many cannot afford adequate heating fuel, due to propane's ever-rising costs. While some heat their homes with wood stoves, this is often inadequate in extremely cold weather, particularly for infants and the elderly. Temperatures this winter have dropped to 80 below zero with windchill. MCC sent 9,750 comforters and 12,600 pounds of canned meat as emergency assistance, which will reach about 10 percent of the reservations' population. The request for blankets from South Dakota, as well as others from MCC workers in Zaire, Russia and the Ukraine, have greatly taxed MCC's comforter and blanket supply, says Material Resources manager Kevin King in Akron, Pa. To donate comforters or blankets or money for purchasing and shipping them, contact the nearest MCC office.

"The Last Frontier" has fallen for Mennonite Board of Missions' Service Adventure program. Five young adults from Canada and the United States became the charter members Feb. 1 of a new Service Adventure unit in Anchorage, Alaska. The unit is sponsored by Prince of Peace Mennonite Church, Anchorage, whose members christened the unit house, going from room to room to pray for each inhabitant.

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American News Service reports that most women in U.S. prisons—about 5 percent of the prison population—are mothers and primary caretakers of children. Some experts say that locking away mothers may not only hurt the children but help perpetuate crime—children of incarcerated parents are five to six times more likely to be incarcerated themselves. A handful of community-based programs around the country are letting female offenders do the time—with their children—in home-like residential facilities. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Though Swift Current (Sask.) Bible Institute closed last year due to declining enrollment, the library will live on. Most of its 8,000 or so books will travel to a Baptist seminary in Odessa, Ukraine. "We thought they could use the books because their library is limited," explained Otto Driedger, vice chair of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan, which along with the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta operated SCBI. Faith Mission in Winkler, Man., arranged the shipping, funded by the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church. A separate shipment of many of SCBI's German-language books will become the property of a Mennonite church in the Ukraine. In a way, the SCBI books are returning to their roots. In 1789 Mennonites settled in the Ukraine. A century later, some of them, including Driedger's grandfather, left the Ukraine for Canada. (*ChristianWeek*)

Service," says Mike. "The decisions I make and the things I say affect people profoundly."

Initially, he admits, the 9 to 5 routine took some adjustment. But he says he has found that the rewards of being in a professional work environment have far exceeded his expectations for his year-long assignment with Mennonite Voluntary Service. MVS is a program of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church.

Jo-Ann Schmidt

Mike Schmidt

Most of BARCA's clients have illegally crossed the U.S.-Mexico border, only seven miles from McAllen, in search of jobs. "The minimum wage in Mexico is 25 pesos per day, which is about $4 U.S.," Mike says. "Even if they were to beg on the streets here, they could earn more than that."

Mike likes hearing people's stories about why they came to the United States as well as trying to figure out what would be the best solution for them. "Sometimes it feels like a heavy weight, but I also like the pressure that comes with the job," he says.

A Spanish major at the University of Waterloo (Ont.), Mike says his conversational Spanish has improved significantly, primarily because he spends about 90 percent of his working day speaking the language.

After growing up in rural Newton, Kan., it has been a new experience for him to be a minority in the United States—he lives in a primarily Hispanic neighbor-hood in McAllen.

When he returns to university this fall, Mike is certain his experiences in MVS will help guide his future.

Phil and Marla Schmidt, recent graduates of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., are also enjoying their MVS assignments in Sioux Falls, S.D., except for the unusually cold winter.

Marla works with refugees through Lutheran Social Services. As community resource developer, she raises awareness about refugee issues, as well as money from local community and church groups. She also manages the approximately 100 volunteers who serve throughout the year.

Marla says she has a greater appreciation for different cultures. After she took a Kurdish family to the dentist, they insisted that she join them in their home for coffee and fruit, she recalls, adding that all the refugees are hospitable.

"I've discovered some skills I didn't know I had," she says. Marla thinks she will continue to stay involved with refugee concerns because she knows what a difference it makes.

Phil works as a math and science tutor at Turning Point, a program for sixth- through eighth-grade students who have been suspended from the public school system.

"I have found that I need lots of patience to deal with kids," says Phil. "If they tell you to take a flying leap, you have to learn not to take it to heart.

"It feels good when the kids don't understand a math or science problem and I can help them get the assignment right," says Phil. He works with an average of six students each day.

Phil and Marla appreciate the support they have received from the Sermon on the Mount church in Sioux Falls. The congregation started a carry-in meal following Sunday worship soon after the Schmidts moved there.

Carla Reimer

Phil and Marla Schmidt

The couple, who signed up for a two-year assignment, are glad they decided to do voluntary service at this point in their lives. "If we had gone to graduate school first, we would have wanted to get into the job market right away," says Phil. "It is easier for us to do voluntary service now." *Carla Reimer*

CPTers near end of 700-hour fast

Hebron, West Bank (CPT)—After the Israeli government issued demolition orders for 700 Palestinian homes throughout the West Bank earlier this year, members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) group in Hebron responded with a time-honored nonviolent tactic.

The five-member team began a 700-hour (29-day) public fast March 1 on behalf of the 700 Palestinian families scheduled to lose their homes, in violation of the Oslo II Peace Accords, because their land is adjacent to Israeli settlements or bypass roads.

"We think that the timing is right, given the level of frustration in the territories. We hope the fast will focus the frustrated energy that can fuel potential violence into other—nonviolent—means of challenging and changing the system,"says a team message.

"We have witnessed the people's frustration about to erupt. This fast may provide a transforming channel for that power," adds team member Cliff Kindy, North Manchester, Ind.

The "Fast for Rebuilding" calls for:

- Israel to stop demolishing Palestinian homes;
- rebuilding already demolished Palestinian homes;
- rebuilding Palestinian identity as a people;
- rebuilding wider Palestinian-Israeli relationships.

The Israeli government cites as justification for the demolitions that the targeted homes were built without permits. However, it does not generally report that Palestinian families whose lands border Israeli settlements have been routinely denied such permits for the last two decades.

In Palestinian East Jerusalem, the difficulty in obtaining building pemits has forced Palestinian families to either build without an Israeli permit or leave the city.

The restrictions on Palestinian building enable the Israeli government to confiscate Palestinian land more easily for Jewish-Israeli development like settlement expansion and the construction of bypass roads.

Since 1967, when Israel occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, more than 2,500 Palestinian homes have been demolished by the Israelis.

CPT members will carry out the public fast in Hebron through Easter Sunday morning, March 30. Israelis and Palestinians with whom CPT has worked during its 20-month presence in West Bank have been visiting Hebron to join the team throughout the course of the 29-day fast.

CPT members participating in the fast are Kindy; Mark Frey, North Newton, Kan.; Art Gish, Athens, Ohio; Terry Rempel, Tofield, Alta., and Dianne Roe, Corning, N.Y.

Lighting a new lamp

Greta Cender-Poplett

Steve Nussbaum, Alicia Poplett, center, and Kate Nussbaum light Advent candles at the Dec. 15, 1996, charter service for Emmanuel Mennonite Church, a newly-formed congregation in Roseville, Minn., a suburb of St. Paul.

About 40 adults and children have been meeting together since August 1996 in homes. Since October they have met in the Roseville Activity Center, a former elementary school.

Robert Hartzler, conference minister for Northern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, and Noah Kolb (pictured behind Alicia Poplett), conference minister for the Mennonite Church's Iowa-Nebraska Conference, were present for the charter service. *Greta Cender-Poplett*

Manitoba Women in Mission's "Enrichment Day" will be held at Steinbach Mennonite Church May 3, with registration beginning at 9:15 a.m. The theme is "In These Times."

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Keith L. Sprunger, North Newton, Kan., received the third annual Harry A. Brunk Scholar Award, presented by Menno Simons Historical Library at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Sprunger, Oswald H. Wedel professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, will use the $2,000 award to help fund a study of Mennonite printing activities in Holland during the 17th and 18th centuries. He is working on a book-length history of Mennonite printing in the Netherlands and America.

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In April 1992, when Los Angeles exploded in violence after white police officers were acquitted of the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King, the United Methodist General Conference was meeting in Louisville, Ky. On hearing the news, delegates prayed for an answer to urban violence and despair. They called the solution they arrived at "shalom communities," a biblical vision of spiritual, emotional and physical well-being, to be focused on small geographic areas—often only a few city blocks—with a goal of combining spiritual, social and economic renewal. Today there are 140 shalom communities across the United States, in which churches are consciously working to build relationships of trust among disparate racial, ethnic and economic groups, besides tackling neighborhood improvement projects. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

The Fund for Education and Training provides low-interest loans to help nonregistrants to U.S. Selective Service afford higher education or job training. Contact FEAT, 1830 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009-1246; (202) 483-1242, fax (202) 483-1246.

• • •

A Spanish church has discovered a way to make giving more convenient for its members, reports *The* (Toronto) *Globe and Mail*. The priests at St. Claudio's Roman Catholic church in Leon, Spain, have installed a bank machine at the church's entrance, allowing donations to be made by credit card or a cash transfer. Parishioners can insert a bank or credit card into the "electronic alms box," punch in the amount they want to donate and walk away with a receipt for tax purposes. Plans are under way to install a second banking machine at the 13th-century Gothic cathedral in Leon, which is raising money for renovations. (*ChristianWeek*)

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An odyssey that began eight years ago finally came to an end Jan. 15 for Olga Cantarero, local program coordinator for Mennonite Voluntary Service in Harlingen, Texas, and a native of Nicaragua. Cantarero entered the United States illegally in January 1989 to join her husband, Carlos, who had a work permit. Both of their daughters were born in the United States. Cantarero left Nicaragua because of threats from Sandinista supporters when she would not support their cause. Her brother's refusal to join the military also put her family's life in Nicaragua in danger. In 1992, U.S. immigration officials discovered her illegal residence and prepared to deport her. She applied for political asylum but was denied it by the court because of a lack of "distinct physical evidence." She then applied for a suspension of deportation because she was afraid to return to Nicaragua and feared a likely separation from her daughters, who are U.S. citizens. The court approved her suspension of deportation Jan. 15, granting her permanent residence in the United States.

Service workers speak against fraternity 'fun'

New Orleans (MCC)—Learning about and fighting against racism have become "part of the assignment" for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. workers here.

Four of them joined in protesting recent activities of the Delta Kappa Epsilon (DKE) fraternity. Brenda Zook of Hagerstown, Md., Kelly Going of Walkill, N.Y., Julie Litwiller of Lancaster, Pa., and Suzanne Southard of Shawnee, Kan., were part of a coalition that organized a press conference Jan. 23 to call attention to fraternity members' actions, which the coalition called racist.

Members of the DKE fraternity, also known as "Dekes," sent out a flier proclaiming Jan. 20—the federal holiday honoring slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.—a "DKE National Holiday." The flier invited people to "Come celebrate the King's birthday with fried chicken from Popeye's [a local fast food restaurant], watermelon and a 'forty' [a 40-oz. bottle of alcoholic beverage]."

The fraternity, while not recognized by Loyola University and suspended from Tulane University, both located in New Orleans, continues to recruit students and distribute material on both campuses.

"Actions such as [promoting the 'DKE holiday'] create a climate of fear and intimidation in which people of color must live not only on the campuses of Tulane and Loyola but also in the Greater New Orleans area and throughout the country," said Carrie Anderson of European Dissent, a white anti-racist organization, in the *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans' daily newspaper.

The coalition, originally formed by Loyola University students, includes European Dissent, The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, an anti-racism training organization, and a group of churches and social agencies organized by the St. Thomas Residents' Council. MCC U.S. workers have served in St. Thomas since 1985.

Coalition representatives, including the four MCC workers, described the DKE flier as "despicable" and called on the fraternity to close its house and be held accountable for its members' racist activities.

Ultimately the fraternity party did not take place. The *Louisiana Weekly* cited the protests as the reason.

For Going, a recent unit retreat that included driving to Selma and Montgomery, Ala., to learn more about the civil rights movement made a difference in how she responded to the situation with the fraternity flier.

"That trip made it possible for me to more fully understand what Martin Luther King Jr. did, and what it means to slander his name," Going says. "King said, 'If there isn't justice for everybody, there isn't justice for anybody.' As Christians we must try to exemplify God's justice in our lives."

Sally Jacober

Accountability: *From left, Brenda Zook, Julie Litwiller, Suzanne Southard and Kelly Going, Mennonite Central Committee New Orleans service workers, protested the recent activities of a local fraternity.*

"Racism is an illness affecting the whole body," says Litwiller. "If we truly believe we are all part of one body, and we see that one part is hurting, we know the whole body suffers as a result."

The DKE fraternity has repeatedly been accused of racist behavior. It boasts a long list of prominent alumni, including current Louisiana governor Mike Foster.

"Current student members of the fraternity will also become influential members of society as elected officials and corporate heads," says Sally Jacober, program coordinator for MCC New Orleans. "Silence would encourage the belief that future racist actions in these arenas would likewise be tolerated." *Deborah Fast*

Record

DEATHS

Peter J. Froese died Jan. 31 at age 84. He was a pastor in British Columbia for 19 years, at Winkler (Man.) Bergthaler Church and at Macgregor (Man.) Bergthaler Church.

Jacob Owen Sr., Pauingassi, Man., died Dec. 8, 1996, at age 85. He was ordained as a minister of the gospel Feb. 27, 1972.

MINISTERS

Terry Berg was licensed and installed as pastor at Comins (Mich.) Church.

Karla Kauffman has resigned as pastor at Fort Collins (Colo.) Fellowship, effective May 31.

Jonathan Larson was installed Feb. 9 as pastor at Berea Mennonite Church, Atlanta.

Earl Sears is resigning as pastor at Faith Church, Newton, Kan., effective the end of May.

Amy Cottrill Wheeler is a pastoral intern at Neil Avenue Church, Columbus, Ohio.

Canadian Mennonite Bible College invites applications for the position of **admissions counselor**. Responsibilities include recruitment, admission counseling and public relations. The applicants are expected to have skills in the areas of organizing, initiating, communicating and public relations. The position becomes available July 1, 1997.

Contact **John H. Neufeld, President, CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4; (204) 888-6781.** Processing of applications will begin after March 31.

Program director at Mennonite retreat center in Pocono Mountains of northeast Pennsylvania. Responsible for planning, leading and monitoring programs throughout the year. Should have Mennonite/Anabaptist perspective and be able to relate with enthusiasm to all ages. Salaried position to begin June 1997.

Send resume or contact **Paul Beiler, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; (717) 595-7505; fax (717) 595-0328.**

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Fresno Pacific University is a dynamic Christian institution of the Mennonite Brethren Church, with liberal arts, professional studies and graduate programs. All candidates for faculty positions must share the university's Christian commitment. Position begins Aug. 15, 1997. Women and members of minority groups are especially encouraged to apply.

For complete description and application, write **Dr. Howard J. Loewen, Academic Vice President, Fresno Pacific University, 1717 South Chestnut, Fresno, CA 93702; (209) 453-2023; fax (209) 453-5502.**

Canadian Mennonite Bible College invites applications for the following positions:

1. A tenure-track position in **Old Testament**. The ability to teach in some other area of the college's program (e.g., practical theology) is a definite asset. The appointment is to be made for fall 1997, or as soon thereafter as possible.
2. A two-year term position (1997-99) in **practical theology**. Applicants should be qualified to teach in several areas such as the church and its life, worship, Christian counseling, Christian education, etc. A less than full-time appointment would be possible if desired.

Applicants should be committed to the Christian faith, and in agreement with the goals of the school. CMBC will begin processing applications March 24.

Send inquiries or applications to the **Academic Dean, CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.**

A new reader, *Sisters, Friends*, contains stories written by Mennonite Central Committee women describing their encounters with Middle Eastern women. *Sisters, Friends* is available free of charge from all MCC offices. Contact MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151; or MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9; (204) 261-6381; or the nearest MCC office.

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Luckman International, an evaluator of World Wide Web sites, has given the Mennonite Central Committee Web site a four-star rating, its highest. This is the fourth award for the MCC Web site. The other three came from Point Communications and Magellan, two well-known Web site evaluators, and Charity Village, a Canadian evaluator that rates non-profit sites. A January London (Ont.) *Free Press* mini-review of the MCC site said, "Despite their rustic image, Mennonites in Canada are among the most internet-savvy of Christian churches." The MCC Web site was created and is maintained by Ryan Rempel, Ottawa.

• • •

Omar and Naomi Nicarry spend eight hours every day except Sunday making comforters for needy people around the world. In return, they get "the pleasure that we're helping somebody," says Omar, 80, a retired farmer and minister of 55 years at the Falling Spring (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. The Nicarrys, who made 560 comforters in 1996, now give most of them to Mennonite Central Committee. In their eight years they have made 2,596 comforters for MCC. The Nicarrys started making comforters on a small scale about 20 years ago, and after Omar retired in 1978 went into it full-time. Their basement is a mini-factory with a row of three sewing machines and two tables where they work. They keep two other sewing machines upstairs to use in the winter when the basement gets too cold. MCC staff say they recognize a Nicarry comforter when they see one because "they are extremely well-made." (*Melvin Durai*)

Associate pastor of youth and Christian education, Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C. Responsible to lead pastor, with team approach. Term: three years (with evaluation after one year).

Job description: administer youth and young adult program; provide pastoral leadership and spiritual direction through personal interaction with youth and young adults; equip and encourage leadership skills of youth council and youth sponsors, using the resources of the Mennonite conferences and interdenominational youth ministries; attend elder and council meetings as necessary; participate in the preaching ministry of PMC; provide coordination and leadership training that supports and expands the Anabaptist theological perspective of the Christian education programs of PMC; participate in outreach through children's ministry programs such as Sunday school, Venture Club, DVBS, etc.; encourage development of family life programs and ministry.

Contact **Dieter Nickel, (604) 263-4319** or call **Peace Mennonite Church, (604) 278-0111.**

Mennonite Mutual Aid and **Mennonite Foundation** have a career opportunity for an attorney who wishes to pursue a career in **estate-planning education**. The role of this person will not be the practice of law but will be to assist individuals and their professional counselors in estate and charitable planning. In that process, this person will help individuals meet their personal, tax and charitable planning objectives. Estate planning experience is not a prerequisite for consideration. Adequate training and mentoring opportunities will be made available to the selected candidate. Candidates must bring a personal commitment to Christian stewardship in harmony with the beliefs of the Mennonite church. Strong relational skills are essential. The position will be located in Goshen, Ind., and will require a minimum of 60 percent travel. For consideration a candidate must be a graduate of an accredited law school with a commitment to pursue the Certified Financial Planner (CFP), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) and other appropriate designations.

Please fax letter of interest and resume to **Cyndee Blue** at **(219) 533-5264;** or mail to **MMA, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.**

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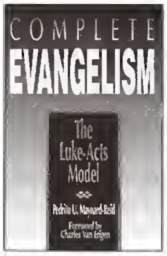

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CCM serves communicators, designers, marketers and others in the Mennonite and Brethren family of faith.

Reviews

FILMS

FAMILY MATTERS

Marvin's Room *written by Scott McPherson, produced by Scott Rudin, Jane Rosenthal and Robert De Niro, directed by Jerry Zaks, rated PG-13*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

Here's another story about a dysfunctional family disrupted (even further) by life-threatening illness.

But *Terms of Endearment* it's not.

Almost everyone in this movie (which Scott McPherson first wrote as a play) is trying to escape from something. Lee (Meryl Streep) is running from extended family and a failed marriage. She refused to go to Florida 20 years earlier when her father Marvin (Hume Cronyn) became ill and her sister Bessie (Diane Keaton) packed up and headed down to care for him and their soap opera-obsessed Aunt Ruth (Gwen Verdon). Lee has scarcely spoken to any of them since. Bessie, who has cared for her dying-by-inches father for two decades, is seemingly running from "real life." Lee's oldest son, Hank (Leonardo DiCaprio), is running from his anger at being abandoned by his father and, after burning down the house, ends up in a mental institution in restraints. Charlie (Hal Scardino), the younger son, runs away from the rest of them into his books.

When Bessie is diagnosed with leukemia, Lee and her sons go to Florida to see if one of them will prove a match for a bone marrow transplant.

Although Keaton received a Best Actress nomination for her role as Bessie, Streep, as usual, proves the most mesmerizing presence on the screen. She has an uncanny ability to become her character and play her as humanly flawed and morally ambiguous yet with hope for redemption. Keaton, as usual, is the variation on a theme of the well-meaning, mostly clueless, often co-dependent caretaker.

Miramax

On the road: *Meryl Streep and Leonardo DiCaprio as mother and son struggling to communicate.*

But Keaton gets the best line in the movie, when Bessie tells Lee that she has no regrets about how she's spent the past 20 years because she's "had such love" in her life. Yeah, Lee says, Dad and Aunt Ruth really love you. It's not just that, Bessie responds, "I've been able to love *them*."

It's been many years since I first saw *Terms of Endearment*, and I still remember how angry I felt at being so manipulated by the excess emotionalism of the final hospital room scenes. *Marvin's Room* doesn't do that.

It reminds you, instead, about the marvelous grace in things as small as the play of light from a mirror aimed at the ceiling of Marvin's room.

BOOKS

ON THE RIDGE

Between Jerusalem and Athens *by Alvin C. Dueck (Baker Books, 1995, 262 pages, $14.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by David Augsburger, Claremont, Calif.

As a resident of "Jerusalem" skilled in the wisdom of "Athens," Al Dueck has called us to stop commuting between the two cities—the spiritual and the secular—and to stand on the narrow ridge between them, clarifying and confronting the thought and practice of each.

A mentor to and leading thinker among Mennonite psychologists, Dueck has become a prophet-critic to the worlds of psychology, therapy and theology. This book, growing from a much appreciated lecture series, refuses the superficial "integration" of theology and psychology so characteristic of much evangelical and mainstream writing, to explore the hard problems and central issues of theology and psychology.

"The most important purpose of this book is to explore the theme of the reign of God as a metaphor for guiding dialogue between culture, religion and psychotherapy," Dueck promises in the introduction. He pursues that exploration with incisive definition of how "the reign of God" can impact our culture, provide a healing context through the community of the Spirit and equip therapists to function ethically and responsibly in their healing relationships.

Central in his work is the conviction that a clear moral vision for culture is necessary and inevitable in creating an effective context for healing. There are no value-free, amoral, apolitical, acultural systems for caregiving; therapeutic neutrality is a myth.

Therapy is defined as a process of socialization into a culture, so the therapist must ask, "Which culture?" Beginning where the client is—in conflict and pain—the therapeutic struggle moves in search of a more just and forgiving "place to stand." When the reign of God defines the parameters of a therapist's vision and central convictions, the movement of both counselor and counselee toward a new orientation and integration of life will reach more deeply into the soul and stretch more widely in its response to the world than the reductionistic realism of modern psychology.

The book stimulates the reader to think about a wide array of social, theological and political issues. Dueck's challenge to Western individualism points toward a renewal of deeper understandings of community. His differentiation between the therapeutic community with its more limited goal of providing resources for moving toward mental health and the church as a community of devotion identifies the more permanent and holistic purposes of the latter.

Dueck has the ability to drop provocative insights like seeds that raise enduring questions. Does the character of the healer affect the quality of the healing? Who does the healing? Does not the Christian healer hold God responsible for the healing? What does it mean for us to be truly Christian in the late 20th century and beyond?

To miss this book is to miss out on some of the most provocative thinking being done in our midst. It is as satisfying as a long deep conversation that touches the soul.

RENDER UNTO CAESAR

Caesar's Coin Revisited: Christians and the Limits of Government *edited by Michael Cromartie (Eerdmans, 1996, 197 pages, $16 U.S.)*

Reviewed by J. Daryl Byler, Washington

This timely book, a collection of four papers and responses, addresses an issue hotly debated since the 1994 U.S. elections: the proper role of government. What should Christians "render to Caesar," and what belongs to God alone?

Luis E. Lugo of Calvin College offers the most careful analysis of the text, Mark 12:13-17. Lugo seems reluctantly content for Christians to fight Caesar's just wars. One wishes he would be more consistent in his analysis: If God is sovereign and calls Christians to love our enemies, how can Caesar's claim take precedence?

Jean Bethke Elshtain of the University of Chicago Divinity School weaves her analysis around the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's resistance to the Nazis. She interprets "render to Caesar" to mean we must give Caesar anything he asks. To justify contemporary civil disobedience (like Bonhoeffer's), she argues that Caesar's domain has expanded since the time of Christ, and thus we must rethink the things that are Caesar's. In fact, early Christians also recognized limits on Caesar's authority (e.g., Acts 5:29).

Kenneth L. Grasso of Southwest Texas State University paints the most positive view of government—creating social conditions conducive to the common good. Still, Grasso recognizes that this responsibility also falls to the church, other social groups and individuals as well. While Grasso's perspective is the most balanced, it is also the most difficult to read.

Finally, Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute gives a libertarian view of government. To make his argument for a very limited role of government, he uses more biblical references than the other writers combined. Unfortunately, his presentation feels more like an attempt to squeeze the libertarian view into Scripture than an intellectually honest effort to be informed by Scripture.

All the writers recognize the important role of the church in society and the limits of government. While most argue for a smaller role for government, none whispers a word about a reduced military—the largest "discretionary function" of government. The book would be improved by adding an Anabaptist perspective to the Reformed, Lutheran, Catholic and libertarian views offered.

WITNESS FROM THE FIELD

Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves *by Keith Graber Miller (University of Tennessee Press, 1996, 314 pages, $36 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Robert Hull, Newton, Kan.

When a Mennonite historian someday writes about Mennonite innovations in the 20th century, what will be included? A short list will probably contain international relief and development activities, victim-offender mediation and restorative justice programs, international mediation work, relief sales and Self-Help stores, and Civilian Public Service.

Another significant innovation has been the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) office in Washington. Keith Graber Miller's book will prove to be a rich resource for our future historian.

This book is not a quick read. Graber Miller has combed all the archives. He interviewed key participants in the work of the Washington Office from the mid-1960s to the mid-'90s. The book includes 55 pages of footnotes, 31 of bibliography and 13 of index. It is a comprehensive portrait, indispensable for historical understanding.

Graber Miller succeeds in describing the careful balancing act Delton Franz performed as director from 1968 to 1993, developing a new way for Mennonites to both listen and witness to government. Neither following slavishly the example of the liberal Protestant Washington offices, nor the moralistic thunderings of the evangelical ones, Franz led the way to a listening, witness-from-the-field, quiet advocacy presence in the U.S. capital.

A sequel to *Wise as Serpents* might focus on the Washington Office's relation to Middle East issues to further assess its style of religious lobbying. Participating in interreligious coalitions involving American Jewish representatives, for example, may have led to a less balanced witness concerning the Middle East than Graber Miller recognizes.

One other caveat concerns his overreliance on interviews with Greg Goering and Jalane Schmidt, short-term MCC volunteers, rather than with Betsy Beyler and Keith Gingrich, who had greater overseas experience and whose length of service contributed more to the "Washington Office style."

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QUIETER PRAYER

Enjoying the Presence of God: Discovering Intimacy with God in the Daily Rhythms of Life *by Jan Johnson (NavPress, 1996, 142 pages, $8 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Arthur P. Boers, Waterloo, Ont.

This is a delightful find. Jan Johnson is a thoroughly evangelical writer who has immersed herself in contemplative traditions.

Johnson had a rich, vibrant, busy and satisfying prayer life for many years until, suddenly, her prayers went dry and she burned out in her busyness. She needed to find a simpler, quieter way of praying. She turned to the writings of Richard Foster, Henri Nouwen and others, who led her to consider a number of helpful "experiments" in "keeping company with God." As with all the best teachers of Christian prayer, she reminds us that loving God and pursuing God's purposes are inseparable.

The book is full of advice and encouragement. It gives good counsel on many simple, practical ways to pay attention to God and delight in God in all our daily life.

Johnson learned to be less demanding of herself, to see herself as a prayer who "bumbles along." In so doing, she frees us to be gentler and less judgmental of ourselves as well.

Johnson helps us look at and reevaluate our devotional times. She emphasizes a spirituality that encourages rest rather than productivity, silence rather than talking, listening rather than advising, empowering rather than preaching, asking questions rather than knowing answers, surrendering rather than gritting your teeth, giving rather than consuming, striving for brokenness rather than upward mobility, and simplicity rather than empire building.

This is a book I recommend to almost anyone. I have one regret, and it is important: Johnson is not good at using inclusive language and needlessly uses a lot of capitalized masculine language for God. This is her prerogative, of course. But it does mean the book will be immediately off-putting for some readers and thus limits the scope of people she can reach.

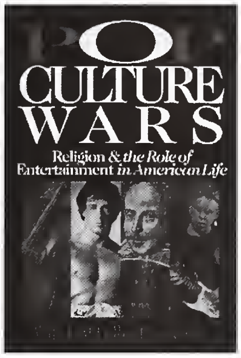
If you only have a few books on prayer, this should be one of them.

ENGAGING THE ARTS

Pop Culture Wars: Religion and the Role of Entertainment in American Life *by William D. Romanowski (InterVarsity Press, 1996, 379 pages, $19.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Larry Penner, Lancaster, Pa.

Romanowski systematically traces the evolution of America's attitudes about art and entertainment from colonial days to the present, focusing most of his attention on theater and film, with less comprehensive treatment of popular music.



Readers can expect a thorough survey of theater and the film industry and corresponding public reactions. And Romanowski makes helpful comments on what a healthy contemporary attitude Christians today might take toward the arts.

Essentially, he advocates critical engagement rather than withdrawal. He critiques the church for looking for works that "stay as far away from sin as possible," rather than teaching Christians to view the arts with a critically educated eye.

This is basically a critical review of entertainment history with concluding remarks about contemporary entertainment and public responses. He briefly shares an aesthetic model for understanding art as fulfilling the functions of cultural transmission, collective memory, social criticism and social unity. But the book does not lay substantial groundwork for a systematic approach to evaluating entertainment/art. Such a groundwork may be needed to help churches and other social institutions educate the public to think critically about entertainment in the way Romanowski advocates.

Pop Culture Wars is a well-researched and thoughtful account. It may have a hard time finding an audience, since its publisher aims at the evangelical mass market, while its content is academic. For those interested in a meaty, in-depth background study of the contemporary entertainment scene, the book will be helpful.

Resources

- **The Economic Way of the Cross**, from the Religious Working Group on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, is aimed at any Christian group re-enacting the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday or interested in studying global economics. Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office helped prepare the resource. It is available for $6 U.S. from the Religious Working Group on WB/IMF, P.O. Box 29132, Washington, DC 20017; (202) 283-1780; fax (202) 832-1780; e-mail mknolldc@igc.apc.org. Seven postcards depicting Way of the Cross enactments from Kenya, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Washington are available for an extra $3.
- **More Little Stories for Little Children: A Worship Resource** by Donna McKee Rhodes (Herald Press, 1997, $7.99 U.S./$11.40 Cdn.) is a collection of 52 stories that use everyday objects to teach scriptural concepts.
- **Great Men and Women of the Bible** by Stephen Fortosis (Paulist Press, 1996, $11.95 U.S.) presents vignettes of 50 characters in both Testaments, along with related Scripture readings.
- **Great Souls: Six Who Changed the Century** by David Aikman (Word, 1996, $22.99 U.S./$32.99 Cdn. hardcover) gives profiles of Billy Graham, Mother Teresa, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II and Elie Wiesel.
- **The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus in 20th-Century Theology** by Mark Saucy (Word, 1996, $16.99 U.S./$24.50 Cdn.) critiques studies from the last 30 years in New Testament and studies on Jesus and the kingdom.
- **Why Believe? Reason and Mystery as Pointers to God** by C. Stephen Evans (Eerdmans, 1996, $13 U.S.) discusses why some believe while others don't, and responds to questions such as, Why would God permit evil?
- **The Soul at Rest: A Journey Into Contemplative Prayer** by Tricia McCary Rhodes (Bethany House, 1996, $13.99 U.S.) is a practical guide with a conservative, evangelical approach.

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Editorial

'You give them something to eat'

The needs around us can feel overwhelming. If they don't, perhaps we are too unfeeling, out of touch with our hurting world. If they do, we can look to our Lord Jesus for guidance on how to respond.

Once Jesus took his disciples with him in a boat to head for a "deserted place by themselves" (Mark 6:32). But crowds of people saw them leave and met them at the shore when they landed. How did Jesus respond? He "had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (6:34). Later the disciples told Jesus to send the people away because there was nothing to eat. Jesus said, "You give them something to eat" (6:37). Eventually, "all ate and were filled" (6:42), and they even had food left over.

John P. Kretzmann, who helped write *Building Communities from the Inside Out,* points to the story of the feeding of the five thousand as an excellent example of how to do community development. Jesus did not just do things for people but encouraged them to act for themselves. And he encouraged his disciples to organize people so that they could help themselves.

While our churches do not have the resources to eliminate the poverty around us (and among us), there is much we can do.

In our day, as our U.S. and Canadian governments make deeper cuts in aid to poor people, what is our response? Do we, like the disciples, say, "Send these people away to fend for themselves"? Or do we follow Jesus' command to "give them something to eat"? And if we do, how do we do it?

The church cannot simply take care of everyone. Take "welfare reform" in the United States, for example. Barbara Howell of Bread for the World, a Christian anti-hunger organization, says that "if the 350,000 churches in the [United States] were expected to pick up these cuts [from the welfare reform legislation], it would cost each church on average $150,000." That's more than twice the size of my own congregation's annual budget.

Safety nets: What then are we to do? Do we accept the common denigration of the poor as "welfare cheats"? Do we stand by while children, battered women, mentally ill, physically handicapped people and others are forced to make it on their own while our governments' safety nets are gradually eliminated?

How we respond to the growing poverty among us goes to the heart of our identity. As Jim Wallis writes in *Sojourners* (March/April), "If the Bible is not clear about the responsibility of God's people for those who are poor, then it is not clear about anything."

While our churches do not have the resources to eliminate the poverty around us (and among us), there is much we can do. As Ray Bowman and Eddy Hall point out in their article (page 3), "Most churches today spend less than 3 percent of their income on … the needy within the congregation and the needy in the surrounding community."

If we take Jesus' command seriously, we will need to find ways of helping people. It will take more than giving away money. It will require organizing ourselves to find more just ways of sharing resources. It will require calling our elected officials to accountability, to stop labeling poor people as welfare cheats when corporate welfare is much more costly.

We will need to listen to the poor and look for creative ways of helping them help themselves. Lynn Miller (page 6) calls for businesses to come to the cities, businesses run by people of "extraordinary faith." People cannot work to feed themselves when there are no jobs.

There are no easy solutions to the problems surrounding us, but Jesus calls us to have compassion on those afflicted by poverty. If we let Jesus' words, "You give them something to eat" enter our hearts, we will act. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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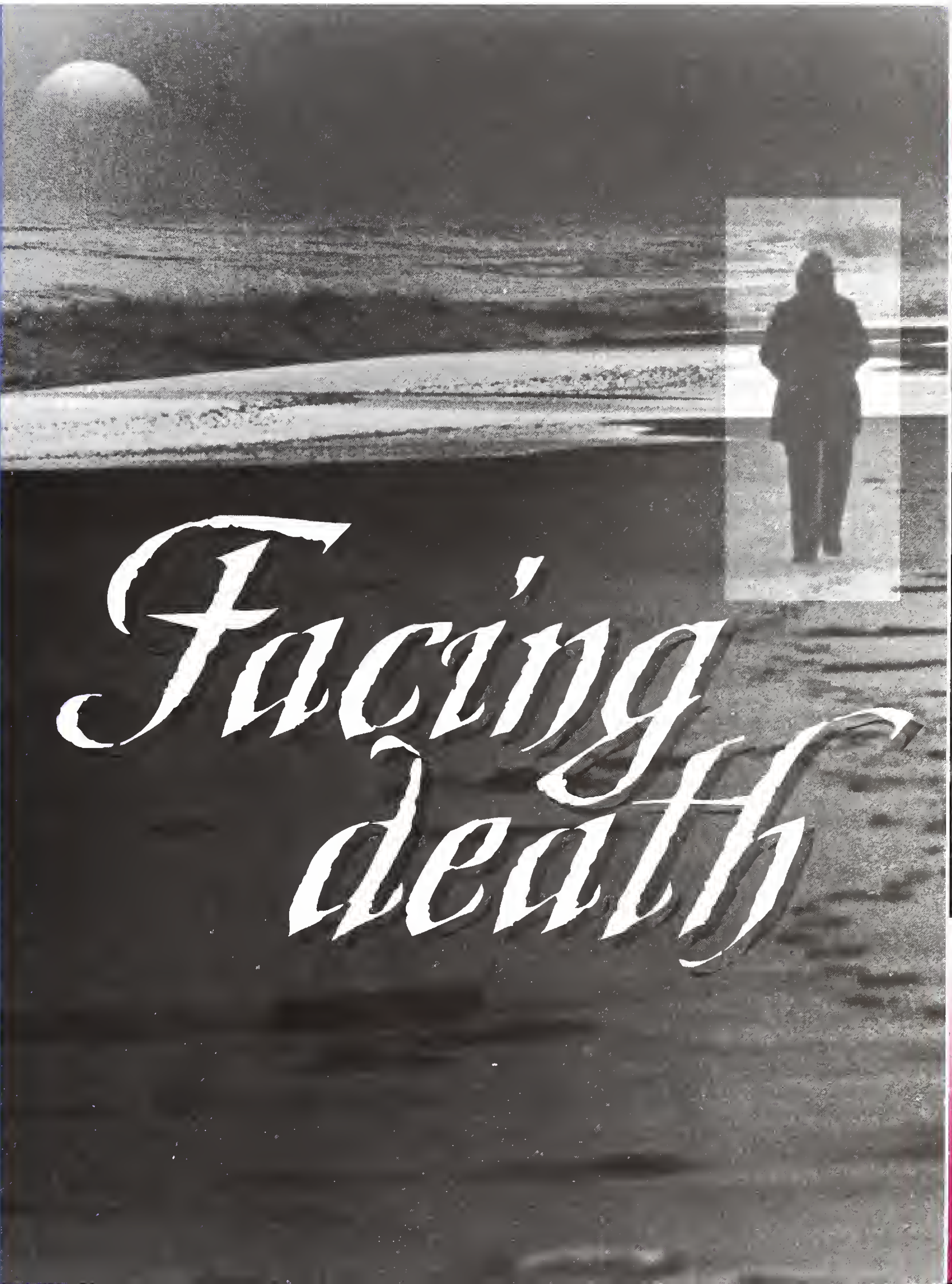


Prologue

Death is a pervasive reality, yet we don't often talk about it. One difficulty for people who are dying is the isolation they often feel. People don't want to be around them, afraid to face their own mortality.

Judy Tomlonson (page 3) writes frankly about the questions she faces as she prepares to die from a rare disease (ALS). Her courage and honesty are a gift to us as she models how to die.

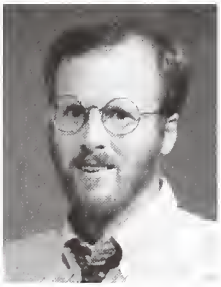
Floyd Bartel (page 6) shares his experiences during the year following his wife's death. He describes what was helpful to him in his grief, which can then help others who face a similar circumstance.

Guilt may afflict a person who is grieving. Shirley Belleranti (page 8) tells how to make that a positive force in one's life. And Marlo Schalesky offers some practical ideas about offering comfort to someone who is grieving.

Lois Barrett presents the first of three Bible studies we will publish (page 11). These are based on presentations she made to the Members in the Military Consultation last November.

Wilmer Sprunger warns us about the influences of secular humanism (page 12).

Our news section reports on the annual meeting of the boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church.



Let me add a note of assurance. As *The Mennonite* merges with *Gospel Herald*, be assured that the new magazine will honor any ongoing subscriptions to either magazine.

Next issue: Technology and faith

Cover: Photo by Religious News Service

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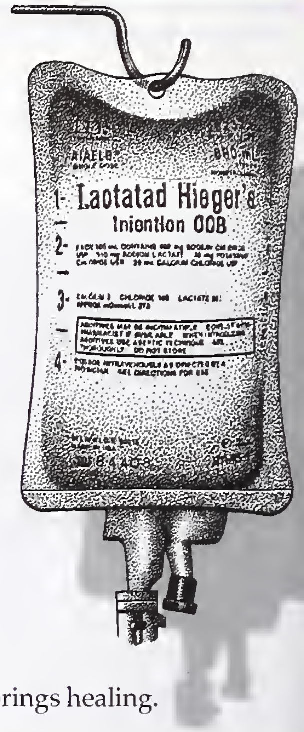

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Afflicted with a terminal disease, the author prepares for her death but ultimately must place herself in God's hands.

Questions as I prepare to die

Judy Schroeder Tomlonson

I have just finished writing instructions to the funeral director who will transport my body to Kansas University Medical Center, where it will be used for research and training purposes. That information will be added to the list of instructions my children will have when my death occurs. These are the few things over which I have control.

I have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease), which is a progressively debilitating and terminal illness. It is likely, unless I should die early from complications of pneumonia, that before I die I will be unable to speak, move, eat or breathe on my own. My body will hold my mind and senses hostage because they will not be affected by the disease.

Already the disease has impacted my life dramatically. I can no longer dress myself and have to use a walker much of the time. For someone who enjoys challenging conversations or friendly visits, speaking is becoming difficult and for others to understand me. I don't have enough finger strength in my left hand to type, even with a computer, and I am losing the ability in my right hand. I can't pick up my grandchildren. I choke much of the time because fluids and food go down the "wrong throat." At times, breathing is a struggle, and fatigue is a constant companion. Often it is impossible to blow my nose. I no longer have control of my emotions; I cry over almost anything.

A series of 'lasts': The average life span of ALS patients is 2 1/2 years. Because I've experienced so many negative changes over the last six months, I now qualify for hospice, which means that I may survive another six months, if this downhill rate is maintained. If this is so, then I have recently experienced a series of "lasts"—the last Grandparents Day at my grandchildren's school, attended the last school Christmas program and Christmas Eve service, helped prepare my last Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, purchased my last Christmas gifts and filled the last Christmas "toota" (sacks).

I told God, "I can't handle this—I give this disease to you." From that moment on, I experienced acceptance of ALS and have been at peace with dying.

I'm not telling you all of the above to elicit sympathy but only to tell you where I am. So far all this has not been devastating, only inconvenient.

I can say this, because the February 1996 afternoon I learned the diagnosis, I proceeded to wash my car and told God, "I can't handle this—I give this disease to you." From that moment on, I experienced acceptance of ALS and have been at peace with dying. As Sir Thomas Browne said, "The first day of our Jubilee is death."

Dying isn't frightening; it's the leaving I regret. There have been periods of grief, knowing I will need to leave my children, grandchildren, family and friends. How do I leave these precious people? I also will miss not witnessing sunsets again or being able to sit on the deck watching birds and listening to them sing. And I will miss baroque music. All these things are a part of the human experience that I am sure will be outweighed immeasurably by the heavenly encounter. As marvelous as heaven will be, God's creations have filled me with awe, and leaving it all creates pain.

I also discovered that verses planted in my memory at some point serve me well. I too can say with the apostle Paul, "I have learned that whatever state I am in, therewith to be content" and, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

There will be a point where the quality of my life will be so diminished that it will hardly resemble life at all. It is my opinion that simply prolonging my life should not be the ultimate value. I certainly am not advocating for Dr. Kevorkian (I think he is wrong), but I am saying that while I still can indicate my desires, I want to establish some control over the rest of my life.

How can I say this when I have just acknowledged that, with Christ's help, I am content? While I do think it is possible that this contentment can continue, he also talked about living an "abundant" life. When I become completely disabled, can my situation be called an abundant life? When is my life no longer viable?

Binding us together: In Romans 14 Paul says, "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. ... So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." Although Paul was speaking of another matter, that portion of verse fits my situation perfectly. I and my family are intertwined with all sorts of cords binding us together and how I choose to live or die and the decisions I make will directly affect them. Already Jill, my second daughter, gave up her social work position to move home to take care of me. Jana, my oldest daughter, fills in for Jill, and son Jeremy and son-in-law Rusty help with jobs I can no longer do. Even my older grandchildren have helped by mowing my lawn.

Knowing that I already belong to the Lord, how do I decide how much life-sustaining assistance I should instruct my family and doctors to provide? My pulmonologist has suggested a tracheotomy, but I indicated I'd rather have a breathing machine. The most effective one costs $7,000. Can I justify that cost?

At some point, even that machine will not be useful. What do I do then? Not being able to breathe creates a terrible, panicky feeling. I've recently learned there is a drug laced with morphine that lessens the panic response. Could I allow myself to drown in my own fluids? I have indicated to my family that when I get to that point, where I am not able to function and I choke or can't breathe, please do not resuscitate me.

If I am at home and Jill or my other children are present and they see me struggling mightily to breathe, do they do as I request and not allow resuscitation? If they do allow me to die, will they suffer guilt pangs because of my request? Is it unfair of me to ask them to allow me to die? Is it placing an unholy burden upon them?

Soon I will need to puree my food in order to swallow it without choking. There will be a point when tucking my chin down to aid my swallowing won't work. Do I choose to have a feeding tube inserted directly into my stomach (gastrotomy) in order to receive nourishment? Once a feeding

I have indicated to my family that when I get to that point, where I am not able to function and I choke or can't breathe, please do not resuscitate me.

tube is begun, it is extremely difficult to discontinue it from a medical and ethical standpoint.

Refusing a gastrotomy would appear to be within my control and would not negatively impact my family. I would simply dehydrate and starve, becoming weaker and weaker until death would overtake me. This is what I would prefer, but I would hope the need for a gastrotomy would occur when my physical abilities are nil. Another ALS person had a gastrotomy, but after a year refused any nourishment and died within 10 days. If I should allow a feeding tube, then I would need to make sure that within my situation I would also be allowed to refuse feeding. Then I could welcome my death.

One of the unfortunate facts about ALS is the progress of the disease cannot be predicted. What occurs with one patient will not follow in another patient, so there is no way to foresee the next level of care I might require. How then do I decide what is best for me or my family?

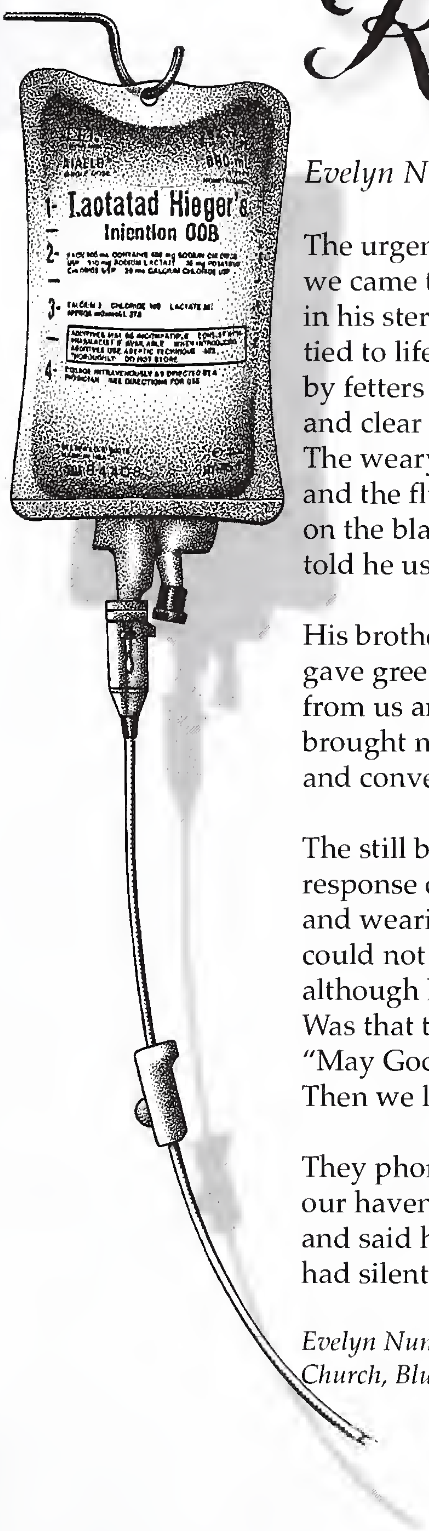
Snowstorm: Some with ALS have purposely chosen to expose themselves to situations that may hasten death. Dan West, a leader in the Church of the Brethren and founder of Heifer Project International, went outside three different times during a snowstorm, resulting in his getting pneumonia. He apparently decided to take charge of his death. Three days later he died.

Like Dan West, I prefer not to have a long, lingering death. Do I think what he did is wrong? From where I sit now and view what is in my future, I believe God would understand.

As clearly as God answered my prayer that day of my diagnosis, I have not received a definitive answer to how much care is enough and when to call it quits. I do know that God granted us free will, and we will receive grace if we try to work this through with dependence on God. Perhaps the unknown progression of the disease will limit my choices, and this dilemma will ultimately be placed in God's hands.

I am counting on the words with which Peter greeted the churches in making these decisions: "Grace and peace be yours in abundance."

Judy Schroeder Tomlonson, who wrote this article in February, lives in Warrensburg, Mo.



Release

Evelyn Nunemaker Krehbiel

The urgent ride behind us,
we came to him
in his sterile white nest,
tied to life
by fetters of tired blue
and clear plastic.
The weary rise of the blanket
and the fluttering penciling of light
on the black waiting space
told he us was earthbound.

His brother leaned over him,
gave greetings
from us and our children,
brought news of family events
and conveyed his pride in this brother.

The still body,
response crippled by yesterday's convulsive storms
and wearied by constant battle for breath,
could not respond,
although his eyes stared upward.
Was that twitch of silent lips a smile?
"May God be with you."
Then we left.

They phoned before we reached
our haven for the night,
and said his soul
had silently taken flight.

Evelyn Nunemaker Krehbiel is a member of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

My first year as a widower

What helped the author make it through the first year after his wife died

Floyd G. Bartel

My first wife, Pearl, died on Feb. 11, 1994. She was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the immune system, in 1982.

After coping well for 11 years, she experienced new symptoms in the fall of 1993, and we became concerned. But I was not prepared for the news we got three days before Christmas. That day Dr. Hynes, her oncologist, told us that her myeloma had switched to a rare form of plasma cell leukemia. This was a serious complication for which there was no treatment. He sent us home and referred us to hospice. I began to grieve in earnest.

Pearl was better prepared than I to face this bad news. When the doctor got up to leave after his visit with us, she sensed his sadness and said, "Dr. Hynes, can I give you a hug?" When I asked her about it later, she said, "He looked so crestfallen, I thought he needed a hug." And when we got home, it was Pearl who called hospice. As I think about it now, I believe one of the things that helped me in my grief later was Pearl's readiness to face her death.

The leukemia progressed rapidly. In just seven weeks she died. But those seven weeks were a special time for our family. Our life focused on Pearl's dying. Our two daughters, who lived and taught out of state, both arranged to stay on after Christmas. Our two sons, who both lived in Newton, stopped every day. We had good help from hospice. Pearl herself had worked for hospice four years as a bereavement, education and volunteer coordinator after she finished her year of clinical pastoral education at Prairie View Mental Health Center, and she knew most of the hospice workers personally.

For several weeks she was able to be up and about at home and enjoy the visits of relatives and friends who came. She planned her own memorial service and spoke to each participant about their part in it. Only in the last couple of weeks did she weaken so rapidly that she required more and more care. She never developed pain, and she died at home with her family, as she wanted to. I believe our grieving was helped by this opportunity we had as a family to say goodbye for seven weeks.

Our children are all adults, and they have been supportive to me. My daughters and I agreed we would visit by phone every week, and we have. I see my sons more often.

The time of the viewing, burial and memorial service brought an outpouring of sympathy and support from the community. This was a source of strength.

I cried every day for the first month after she was gone. It felt like a bad case of the flu, when your upset stomach feels worse and worse until you go to the bathroom and heave. That brings relief for a little while until it builds up again. My crying was like that. It brought temporary emotional relief from the pain. While I traveled to distant assignments in my car, I listened again to the tape of the memorial service and cried some more. Gradually the pain of missing Pearl eased.

Faith community: I often thanked God that first year for my faith community. In addition to the immediate response at the time of death there were a number of ways my being a part of such a faith community made a difference. For one thing, Pearl and I were part of a small prayer and support group. I could talk freely there. They kept me in their prayers. Our Sunday school class at church happened to choose *A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis for class discussion, so I bought a copy. The first time I attended the class after the funeral, I talked about my experience. That was cathartic.

Friends stopped by my home or at the office to visit and graciously listened to me. I also decided fairly early to have lunch with someone each week at my invitation. I chose two friends as confidants with whom I could talk from time to time.

My work proved helpful. I went back to work soon afterward but decided to work three-fourths time rather than full-time, to give myself extra time for transitions. In my work with churches and pastors, both with individuals and with groups, I often talked about my experience.

I put together a pocket-sized photo album of pictures selected from snapshots we'd taken during those last seven weeks. I called it my "Book of Last Times" because they were pictures of the last time she had done a variety of things during those last weeks. As I met friends we'd known, I showed them the photo album as a way to share more interestingly what

At first, I felt resentment that Pearl had died just as we were about ready to enjoy our retirement years. But gradually I realized I could take a different attitude.

had happened. I realize now that telling my story this way was more important for my healing than it was to them.

Learning to live alone was a new experience. I had been married at 21, and we had shared more than 42 years together. Housekeeping was not the problem. Pearl and I had shared that for a long time. I enjoyed cooking, and I love gardening, which became especially therapeutic that year. I learned to follow recipes and try new kinds of cooking. I eventually dared to invite guests and serve my cooking, and I took food I'd prepared to potluck meals. But it was lonely doing these things alone, eating alone, spending evenings alone, sleeping alone. Weekends and holidays were especially lonely. Pearl had done much of the planning for our socializing as a couple. Now I had to learn to plan ahead better for myself.

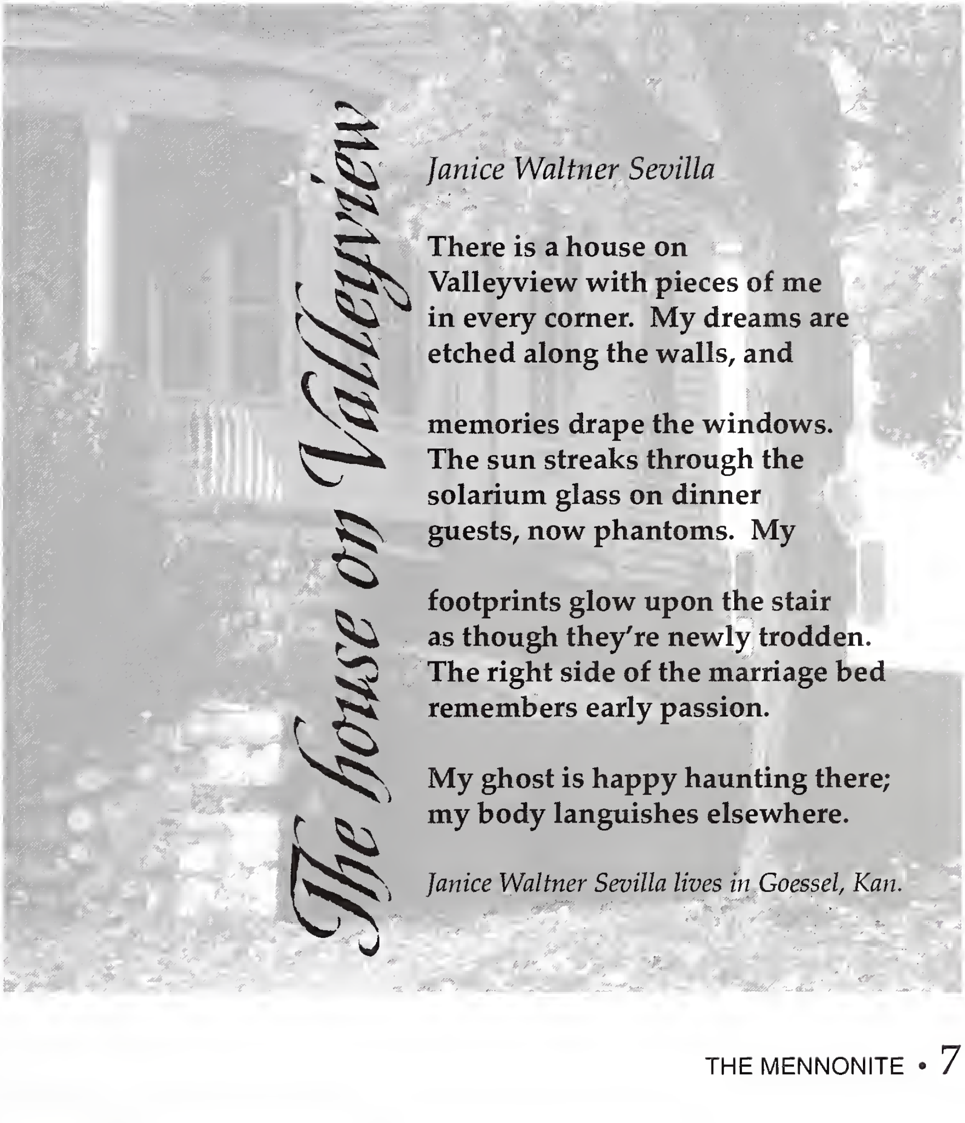
Each holiday I tried to think ahead how we could celebrate together without Pearl. My children also took new initiative to plan and invite the family together. Each holiday we did something special to remember Pearl.

It felt strange going to plays, concerts and other public events alone. Even going to church alone felt strange at first, but most Sundays someone asked me how things were going. I found myself looking forward to worship more as the months went on.

Daily writing: Over the years I have done some daily writing about my experiences. That first year I wrote much more. Keeping such a daily log with commentary has been a useful exercise for reflecting, for keeping in touch with my experience and sensing how God was at work in my life.

At first, I felt resentment that Pearl had died just as we were about ready to enjoy our retirement years. But gradually I realized I could take a different attitude. I could also see this as an opportunity to plan for the future in some new ways. I decided to participate in the eight-week grief support group series offered by hospice and the local hospital. It was one of the things Pearl had led in her work with hospice. I enrolled in the master gardener program offered by the county extension office. I joined a weekly beginners class in square dancing. It has felt good to look forward and to become more proactive.

Floyd Bartel is a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.



The house on Valleyview

Janice Waltner Sevilla

There is a house on
Valleyview with pieces of me
in every corner. My dreams are
etched along the walls, and

memories drape the windows.
The sun streaks through the
solarium glass on dinner
guests, now phantoms. My

footprints glow upon the stair
as though they're newly trodden.
The right side of the marriage bed
remembers early passion.

My ghost is happy haunting there;
my body languishes elsewhere.

Janice Waltner Sevilla lives in Goessel, Kan.

Make guilt a positive force

Grief can lead to guilt, but forgiveness brings healing.

Shirley W. Belleranti

Grief and a sense of loss are bound to occur following the death of a loved one. But I was unprepared for the guilt I felt after my mother died. I remembered love unspoken, thoughtful deeds undone, petty annoyance when Mother's needs infringed on my pleasures, insensitivity to her unhappiness.

I wondered why I hadn't made more of an effort to show her I loved her. I wondered why I seldom thought to tell her how I felt about her.

Now it was too late.

Then I watched my children. I saw that their occasional thoughtlessness is a preoccupation with living rather than a lack of caring. They're making decisions that will affect their lives for years to come. They don't need to constantly reassure me of their love. I know it's there. It dawned on me that Mother must have seen that long ago.

But could I forgive myself? I found help in Hebrews 4:16: "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

A major theme of Jesus' teaching was forgiveness. When Judas' kiss marked him for crucifixion, Jesus forgave him. As Jesus prepared to die, he forgave Peter for denying him. As he hung on the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34).

Judas did not "approach the throne of grace with boldness," and his guilt destroyed him.

Peter, on the other hand, repented and sought forgiveness. He resolved his guilt and became one of Jesus' most able apostles.

Unresolved guilt is a negative force that warps and twists many lives. It can drive anyone to self-destruction, just as it did Judas.

But when we repent and ask for forgiveness, as Peter did, we can make guilt a positive force. Then we can be more effective as Christians.

The guilty feelings that lingered after my mother died taught me to be more aware of people around me. It's easier now for me to reach out and touch people I care about, to give them a friendly pat on the back or a warm hug. Best of all, the words "I love you" flow freely and honestly.

In resolving my own guilt, I gained a deeper understanding of my faith and of myself. Now I remember my mother with love and gratitude. I no longer feel guilty.

Shirley W. Belleranti lives in Mesa, Ariz.

The do's and don'ts of offering comfort

Marlo M. Schalesky

Do's:

- Say simply, "I'm so sorry." You can give the person a hug, squeeze his or her hand reassuringly or place your hand gently on his or her shoulder.
- Say, "I'll be supporting you with my prayers during this tough time." Then pray.
- Pray for God's help, sensitivity and guidance in all your interactions with the grieving person. Remember that the Holy Spirit is our comforter.
- If you knew the deceased, share something (briefly) that you appreciated about him or her. A simple, "I'll never forget how Charlie helped me when ... " can be a great comfort.
- Ask if you can bring over a meal, look after small children for a few hours or make any necessary phone calls. If they must leave town for the funeral, ask if they need a ride to the airport or if you can look after their pets or water their plants while they're away.
- Offer a sympathetic ear a few days after the funeral/memorial service. Often people will feel like talking about the service and their memories of the deceased after their initial grief has subsided. Taking the person out to a one-on-one lunch can provide the perfect opportunity.

Don'ts:

- Don't ask if the deceased was a Christian. What will you say if the answer is no?
- Don't give advice. Let people grieve in their own way.
- Don't talk about your own grief (i.e., when your Aunt Edith died, or when your cousin was in an accident or especially when you lost a beloved pet). This will only make the other person feel awkward, as if they have to comfort you, instead of the other way around.
- Don't trivialize others' grief with comments such as, "You should be happy that Charlie has gone on to heaven" or, "At least Claire lived a full life" or, "Maybe it's better this way."
- Don't put on a happy face. As Proverbs 25:20 says, "He who sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, and like vinegar on a wound."

Marlo Schalesky lives in Gilroy, Calif.

Letters

KUDOS AND A CORRECTION

First, kudos on your Jan. 14 issue on racism. You skillfully interwove articles that addressed both the interpersonal and systemic components of this principality and power.

Second, a correction. In my article, "Mennonites and Racism: Much Work To Do," I incorrectly used the term "Anabaptist." At several key points where I meant to write specifically about white Anabaptists like myself, I used the word Anabaptist without a qualifier. As I implied elsewhere in the article, racism comes from the power of the white community to enforce our individual and collective prejudices. In both church and society, this systemic power is not made available to our brothers and sisters from African-American, Asian, Hispanic and Native communities. Hence, racism is found only in white communities. I should have been more specific.

I'm grateful to colleagues of mine who pointed out my mistake. Thanks for allowing me to acknowledge it here. *Tobin (Jody) Miller Shearer, Akron, Pa.*

ISRAEL AND MENNONITES

I would like to comment on the two letters in the Feb. 25 issue (page 16) that were critical of Mennonite Central Committee's actions in the Middle East. I welcome the opportunity to explain and to engage in dialogue with concerned people from our churches.

In the letter by Arthur Simpson concerning a "politicized gospel," he implies that one can either preach salvation or work toward producing political change. A similar concern is addressed in Abe Janzen's letter wondering if MCC is seeking to "build the kingdom of God in this world."

Preaching salvation and service cannot be separated, but are both vital components of witness. When Jesus was asked the question, "Who is my neighbor?" his response was the story of the good Samaritan. As Christians we are called upon to respond to need, regardless of whether the need is caused by a natural disaster or a human political action. Our neighbors do not cease to be our neighbors simply because they are subject to political oppression. Indeed, what type of witness would it be if a group proclaiming truth and love refused to help those in their community who have great need? The very reaching out to assist others is in fact a powerful form of witness.

Abe Janzen says that today's Israel is the "chosen people." There are many different interpretations of this issue, and it would be difficult to find consensus. More basic than the issue of whether today's Israel is God's exclusively chosen people is whether Israel acts in accordance with God's principles. The Old Testament prophets frequently spoke out against the injustices of God's "chosen people" (Amos 5, Isaiah 58). In the New Testament, James, Paul and others confronted injustice and practices that were harmful to the broader community (James 2, 1 Corinthians 6). To speak against injustice is not to curse, as suggested by Janzen, but to offer an invitation for repentance and change.

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On a final point, Janzen refers to "all Abraham's posterity." Scripture tells us that the Arab peoples are descendants of Abraham through Ishmael. We wish for the well-being of all the descendants of Abraham—both the Jewish and Arab peoples. *Ed Epp, Director of Middle East Programs for Mennonite Central Committee, Winnipeg*

I would like to express disagreement with the letters of Arthur Simpson and Abe Janzen (Feb. 25 issue, page 16). If the church remains silent in the face of political oppression and injustice, it is also making a political statement—a statement of acquiescence and support. It is the same statement that the church of Germany made at the time of the Holocaust. Janzen quotes selected Scriptures to prove his conclusions but conveniently omits Galatians 3:7: "You should realize, then, that the real descendants of Abraham are the people of faith." I hope and pray that the Mennonite church and Mennonite Central Committee continue to speak out against oppression and injustice wherever it is found. *Alvin Schmidt, Walton, Kan.*

GLAD FOR MWC IN CALCUTTA

Enclosed is my check to supply *The Mennonite* to people overseas who cannot otherwise afford a subscription.

Thanks for the succinct and faithful, encouraging coverage of Mennonite World Conference (Feb. 25 issue) and sensitive descriptions of Calcutta and India. Your listing of the countries with most registrants and fewest registrants at MWC names only 17 out of 66 countries from which representatives registered. Forty-nine countries were not named. I think naming them would have been helpful, even if the numbers registered from each are not necessary. India '97 was my seventh consecutive MWC. I am glad that Europeans and North Americans were not present in overwhelming numbers for a change. On the other hand, I wish many more might experience the spiritual and cultural immersion India afforded us.

I arrived in Calcutta on Jan. 2, four days before the conference. I lived at Monica House, across the street from Mother Teresa. In the beginning I shared the bed and breakfast residence with 20 others (four or five in a room), mostly short-term volunteers (three weeks to eight months) and Mother Teresa's nurse. Many of the volunteers, from seven countries, participated daily in both early morning and evening Mass with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity. I joined them on my first Sunday for the 6 a.m. Mass, which celebrated both Epiphany and the anniversary of Mother Teresa's first arrival in Calcutta in 1929. She was present, accompanied by her nurse.

By evening of that Sunday, the first day of the MWC, all the volunteers but one were displaced by Mennonites enrolled at the conference. At first I was disturbed that the volunteers had to move to make room for us. Then I learned that they were prepared to make the move. They were informed upon their arrival that Mennonites had reserved the space a year in advance. I also learned that we paid more via MWC than we would have paid directly. However, I have no objection to contributing to the economy of

Calcutta. This is a secondary benefit of having MWC in India. *Virgil Brenneman, Goshen, Ind.*

U.S.-CANADA TENSION

In the midst of integration conversations between the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, there is a Canada-U.S. tension that threatens to overshadow the coming together of two denominations. You hear it when U.S. Mennonites say they can't understand the insistence of some Canadian Mennonites to maintain the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in an integrated church. The tension pops up when U.S. Mennos assume their agenda is also Canadian agenda. When this tension arises, U.S. Mennonites seem bewildered, and Canadian Mennonites feel powerless to explain adequately their position.

I'm becoming convinced this tension is not directly connected to theology, church polity, Canadian patriotism or U.S. snobbery. Rather, two nations, though neighbors, are separate countries with different sociological dynamics shaping their peoples. Some things are the same, but much is different.

English- and French-speaking Canadians are trying to figure out whether they can live together. They are still building a nation. There is much tension and economic uncertainty. Canadians' famed social services safety net has developed holes. A defining culture and ethnicity is absent. There is one common theme, however. Canadians are proud of the idea of Canada. When this idea is threatened to be overwhelmed by the dominant culture of another place, Canadians balk. Canadian Mennonites are struggling with what it means to be an Anabaptist presence in the midst of this uncertain context. An integrated Mennonite church, with a heavy tilt toward the United States, moves them away from their efforts. It should be understandable that without preservation of what Canadian Mennonites are working to develop, there will be resistance.

Many U.S. Mennonites struggle with the themes of empire in their homeland. They recognize their nation's dominance over this hemisphere and much of the world. They wish the state of affairs were more equitable, although they spend little time improving their awareness of how this might be done. They proclaim a belief that their Savior is preparing a people of every tribe, language and nation. An integrated church whose structure ignores national distinctives feels like it honors this notion of a global people of God. They are looking to be Christians who live over against the empire mentality of their culture. For Canadians to prefer some sort of national structures feels like Canadian Mennonites have a spiritual problem of nationalism.

A little time, a little listening, a little understanding show that Canadian Mennonites are not seeking to avoid integration, and U.S. Mennonites are not intending to overwhelm Canada. Without the time and listening, however, we can be assured each will end up doing exactly what the other fears.

For us to build a strong North American Anabaptist presence, we need to take time to identify issues like these, to ask whether these are the appropriate issues to guide our integration discussions, and gain agreement on what issues we must work at before anyone starts pushing solutions. Otherwise, we face the problem of solutions that do not match the issues. When we face the real issues, new options become possibilities.

Whatever we decide—however we act—let it be with the grace to listen and accurately articulate the perspective of others before we put too much energy into being heard. Otherwise, we are stuck with the primary energy for integration being put into maintaining the structures of a nonintegrated church. That doesn't sound like a very compelling vision for the future. *Mark Vincent, Elkhart, Ind.*

WELCOME THOSE IN PAIN

As a member of the Mennonite Central Committee Network of Survivors of Sexual Abuse, I am mourning the loss of one of our Network members. She has struggled for years attempting to heal from the sexual abuse she suffered. I do not believe she found enough support to continue her struggle. As a survivor who shared the same geographic community, I failed to reach out to her regularly. We as a network failed to give her support and encouragement and community. (Studies show clearly that survivors who are a part of a survivor community are far more likely to heal and learn to thrive.) We as a church failed to provide a worship setting where she could be safe enough to bring her pain and do the work of healing among us. Where was her welcome? Where was the invitation for her to bring her pain to the worshiping community? Isn't one of our purposes as a community of faith to remind one another of the loving arms of the One who is always with us, and to pray and uphold those of us who are weak?

Most survivors find that they cannot bring their pain to church and to their Christian friends. My friend lost her life to the struggle. Why does concrete caring not extend to every survivor who wakens to life-shattering pain and grief day after day? Where was the Vision: Healing and Hope? For whom is the hope and welcome of the church? What will be our corporate response as Mennonites to this need? Why are regional conferences on this issue no longer being held to extend community to survivors? What will your congregation do to reach those grieving and suffering in your midst? Let us throw off our indifference to this pain and these hurting ones among us and reach out with the arms of Christ to welcome each one in pain, no matter what its source.

The longer I have worked on my healing, the more aware I am of the hundreds of survivors who still struggle to be a part of the church and continue to be hurt by that attempt. We are hurt by those who are indifferent, by those who are afraid of what we will say, by those who remain silent when wrong is done, by the largely unwilling structure of the church to address this issue and this problem of abusers among us.

Don't misread me, I am grateful for all the things the church has done, yet there is still too much to do, too many people still suffering alone and silent, and as long as we continue to lose people who can't find healing within the church family, it is a great tragedy. It is one we must work together to change. *Jane Miller Leatherman, Goshen, Ind.*

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Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity. Write to* The Mennonite, *P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; fax (316) 283-0454; e-mail TheMennonite@gcmc.org.*

Love God above all else

Nonviolence is not a distinctive but an integral part of Christian faith.

Lois Barrett

There is a danger in proof texting. There is a danger in basing our peace stance only on Jesus' teaching. Unless we connect peacemaking with the center of our faith, we will always be tempted to treat peacemaking as an extra, an add-on, an option.

In the early part of this century, Mennonite leaders tended to treat conscientious objection to military service based on a commitment to peace and nonresistance as a Mennonite "distinctive" or "restriction." They assumed Mennonites could agree with other Christians on the fundamentals of the faith. But Mennonites (and other historic peace churches) had found some extra things in the Bible, the "distinctives." The more liberal version of this understanding claims that every denomination has a vocation, a unique calling from God. Mennonites may have a vocation for peacemaking, and Episcopalians a vocation for liturgy.

This gives the impression that peace is optional, that you can take it or leave it, that what you believe about peacemaking is independent of what you believe about God, salvation or the nature of the church.

The new *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* takes a different approach. You will find peacemaking not only in Article 22, "Peace, Justice and Nonresistance," but also woven through most of the other articles in the confession, including those that concern the "fundamentals"—God, Jesus Christ, salvation and the reign of God, for example.

Luke 10:25-28 has to do with the center of faith. The expert in Jewish law asks Jesus the key question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" That is, What must I do to have a part in life with God? Jesus turns the question back on the lawyer, who gives the right answer, the words known to every good Jew: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind" (the words of Deuteronomy 6:5, the Shema) "and your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

Face on the ground: If we love God with everything we have, God is our ultimate love, our ultimate loyalty, the ultimate object of our worship. We cannot apply this verse only to our personal lives; it has to apply to our public lives as well. Worship is, in fact, a public, political act. In the most concrete origins of the Hebrew word for worship, it means bowing down, face on the ground, in front of the ruler.

Until the significant expansion of the church into the Gentile world, the connection between the ultimate worship of God and military service was not an issue. Jews were exempted from Roman military service. The Romans wanted it that way, primarily because they didn't want soldiers who insisted on resting every seventh day. As the church expanded among the Gentiles, significant numbers of Gentiles were not eligible to be in the military: women, of course, but also slaves. So participation in the military only gradually became an issue.

> ***To serve God, to love God above all else, means to love the neighbor, even if the neighbor is an enemy.***

In the early centuries of the church, before the time of the Roman emperor Constantine, when the church still taught that Christians should not be part of the Roman army, the church based its peace teaching not only on the Sermon on the Mount but on Scriptures against idolatry. The main problem they saw with the military was idolatry. To be a Roman soldier required taking an oath of allegiance (the "sacramentum"), and for many soldiers it required giving a pinch of incense to Caesar. Caesar was to be called "savior" and "lord." No matter what one believed about warfare in the Old Testament, becoming part of the Roman military meant breaking the first commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me."

Idolatry was not the only theological issue involved. There was also an understanding that violence was not the way of Jesus. For example, the church father Cyprian wrote, "The world is wet with mutual blood[shed]: and homicide is a crime when individuals commit it, [but] it is called a virtue when it is carried on publicly."

In the 20th century, Mennonites have usually made the argument against military service in terms of nonviolence. And important theological work has been done connecting peace with Jesus' cross and resurrection. But we have done less with the issue of idolatry and the military. Although U.S. and Canadian soldiers are not literally offering pinches of incense, there is still a question of where one's ultimate allegiance lies. There are still oaths of allegiance. There is still an expectation of complete obedience to the commander-in-chief and every other commanding officer. People in the military commit themselves to obey the military chain of command, no matter what. There is acceptance of the assumption that freedom can be defended only by violence or threat of violence. There is a placing of identity with the nation-state rather than with God's holy nation.

This is obviously a problem also for people who are not in the military. In Oklahoma, for example, one cannot get a state job, whether teaching at a state university or typing at the state house, without signing a loyalty oath. But it is especially an issue in the military because of the chain of command and relatively less freedom one has just to quit when asked to do something against one's conscience. This question of putting God first is part of the reason Mennonites traditionally have taught rejection not only of combat service but also of noncombatant roles in the military.

To serve God, to love God above all else, means to love the neighbor, even if the neighbor is an enemy. This was also the understanding of the early church.

There is a connection between

loving God and loving the neighbor, even when the neighbor is an enemy. When Jesus praised the lawyer for knowing the two most important commandments, the lawyer needed a little more explanation of the second commandment: Who is my neighbor? Jesus answered him with the story of the good Samaritan, a story about enemies.

We must understand that the wounded man is a Jew and the one who stops to help is a Samaritan. In first-century Palestine, Jews had no dealings with Samaritans, as John 4:9 states. Samaritans and Jews wasted no love on each other; they were enemies. To be a Samaritan was to have suffered, as a minimum, insult from Jews.

Ambulance: What does it mean for a Samaritan to love a Jewish neighbor? For the Samaritan in Jesus' story, it meant more than calling an ambulance, but giving of himself, his time and his money to help a representative of an "enemy" group.

In other words, love of neighbor implies love of enemy—not only not killing the enemy but not letting the enemy die, not even indifference—not just love of a personal enemy, but an ethnic enemy, a national enemy.

> ***Love of neighbor implies love of enemy—not just love of a personal enemy, but an ethnic enemy, a national enemy.***

Putting God first is connected with loving enemies. Matthew 5 reminds us of God's gifts to all, whether people are good or bad. Romans 5 reminds us that God loved us and sent Jesus the Son for us when we were still enemies of God. This God who has shown us so much love calls us also to love our enemies.

At the center of our faith is loving God. This is the first commandment, and the second is like it: loving the neighbor who may be an enemy.

Lois Barrett is executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. This is Part I of an abridged version of a presentation she gave at the Members in the Military Consultation last November. Parts II and III will appear in later issues.

Speaking out

From where have we come?

Have Mennonites fallen prey to secular humanism?

Wilmer Sprunger

Many of our church leaders and vocal members no longer hold to the doctrines accepted at the outset of the Anabaptist movement. Have we sacrificed our heritage for acceptance by the world around us?

A book review in *The Mennonite* approved of people trying to fit their spiritual experience to their sexuality instead of modifying their sexuality to conform to biblical standards. In North America the trend seems to be away from biblical principles toward a secular worldview.

Over four centuries ago we chose to break with Rome and other Christian groups, paying with our lives for obedience to Christ and his teachings. About the same time there developed another movement called humanism, which taught the worth of humans as well as appreciation of the arts. This helped foster the Renaissance and Reformation, which affirmed the dignity of the individual created in God's image.

> ***The Bible says to hate evil and love good, to love everyone—brother, neighbor and enemy—but nothing about tolerance.***

A group of editors and educators published the Humanist Manifesto I in 1933. This was updated with the Humanist Manifesto II in 1973. Their philosophy is a "religion" that holds that "man is the measure of all things" and the center of the universe; God has no value or meaning. In 1961 the Supreme Court ruling in the case of Torcaso v. Watkins called their philosophy "secular humanism," because it allowed no room for God.

Many Christians have failed to see the danger of this movement and assumed that secular humanists are willing for both religions to co-exist. Such humanists are advocates of Darwinism, which also denies God, declaring that the world and all living creatures just happened by chance.

It's not surprising people promote such ideas. If they can convince themselves and society around them that everything happened without God and that "man" is the center of the universe, they need not be accountable to anyone. There is no right or wrong; everything is relative, they say.

That's a far cry from what Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" and, "Your word is truth." He believed you could know truth and that it was found in himself and God the Father. Have we been deceived by the secular humanist philosophy that instructs us to be tolerant of everything? The Scriptures nowhere tell us to be tolerant. The Bible says to hate evil and love good. It tells us to love everyone—brother, neighbor and enemy—but nothing about tolerance. Have we been deceived by the world?

Have we been guilty of wasting our time and resources trying to prove to ourselves that what God so clearly calls sin is only "an alternate lifestyle"? When we identify certain practices as contrary to biblical standards, many around us call us meanspirited, hateful and intolerant. Can Christians be tolerant of everything and still maintain that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life?

Do we too often believe pseudoscience (with its "agenda") instead of God's Word? Mennonite writer Robert J. Baker has written, "Mennonites are great on peace but shy away from holiness. Wonder why?" I submit that we cannot be "the quiet in the land" and be salt and light.

Wilmer Sprunger is a member of First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind.

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"Speaking out" and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite.*

News

General Board passes integration proposals

Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC)—Denominational merger seems to be gaining momentum, as the General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), meeting during the annual Council of Commissions here March 14-18 on the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, affirmed and commented on proposals from the Integration Committee that included forming one General Board by 1999.

Integration: The General Board (GB) heard a report from the Integration Committee (IC) and gave initial feedback to proposals concerning the name of the new denomination, composition of a new GB, representation and frequency for delegate sessions (assemblies), the concept of four denominational regions, and organizing the work of the denomination among four program boards.

"We have to discipline ourselves to continue to look at the big picture," said IC co-chair Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Bluffton, Ohio. "Are we going in the right direction?"

The committee's proposal that the new denomination be named Mennonite Church brought mixed response.

"I think it's a strong choice. I think it will serve us well," said Dennis Koehn, Goshen, Ind., noting that the name speaks clearly to society. But some board members wondered if other Mennonites would view the name as arrogant. "We achieve non-arrogance by not emphasizing the word 'the,'" said Tom Lehman, Chapel Hill, N.C.

In the end, the board voted in favor of the name, with one dissenting vote.

The GB also affirmed a plan presented by the Periodicals Integration Sub-Committee for the creation of a new denominational periodical to serve a U.S. readership, with publication to begin in January 1998.

The Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) is also developing a periodical. GC general secretary James Schrag said that although the IC had reaffirmed its desire for one periodical to serve U.S. and Canadian Mennonites, "we also felt it important to recognize the usefulness of a denominational paper in Canada."

GB member James Harder, North Newton, Kan., who served on the subcommittee, noted that the proposal asks the editors to include common content. "I think this is a good intermediate point to be at," he said.

Nickel Friesen presented a proposal for a new GB of approximately 26 members representing geographic regions, associate groups and program boards, to be the keeper of the pieces in the new denomination. "It's a strong proposal," said Marian Franz, Washington.

Discussion centered around the different understandings in the MC and GC of the term "associate groups," which on the MC GB include racial/ethnic minority and women's groups.

Lee Delp, Lansdale, Pa., expressed concern that the term "associate" suggests the groups are not quite equal. Schrag explained that in MC circles the term signals "including rather than excluding." The board affirmed the direction of the IC in principle and offered counsel to evaluate the term "associate" and look at overall gender balance rather than appointing a representative of a women's organization.

Dave Linscheid

"We have to discipline ourselves to continue to look at the big picture."

Dorothy Nickel Friesen

The board affirmed a proposal that the denominational assembly include one voting delegate per 100 church members, resulting in a body of about 1,600. While this moves away from congregational representation, it allows the potential of one representative from each congregation, should the GC area conferences decide that is important, Schrag said. The board also affirmed the suggestion that delegate

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Women's groups plan merger by August 1 / p. 16

DGS celebrates good budget year / p. 16

COE affirms mission statement / p. 17

COM meets with MC counterpart / p. 18

Voices for Non-Violence and Mennonite Central Committee Canada will sponsor a training for advocates of survivors of sexual abuse by a church leader/caregiver, May 9-10 in Winnipeg. Enrollment is limited. Call (204) 269-8555 for more information.

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May Fellowship Day, one of three annual national worship services sponsored by Church Women United, is set for May 2 with the theme "CWU—Sowing Seeds in Prepared Soil." For additional information and resource material, contact the CWU national office at 475 Riverside Drive, Room 812, New York, NY 10115; 1-800-298-5551.

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Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers are investigating damage and helping clean up in the flood-ravaged Ohio River Valley, particularly around Cincinnati and in small towns south of Louisville, Ky. MDS seeks short-term and longer-term volunteers. Phone the MDS office at (717) 859-2210. MDS also urgently requests funds; mail contributions designated for Midwest Storms to MDS, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501. The violent weather system in early March that lashed the Ohio River Valley with rain also spawned tornadoes in Arkansas and Mississippi. MDS continues to investigate how to help those tornado victims.

A conference on issues related to family businesses will be held May 23 at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. John L. Ward, professor of private enterprise at Loyola University, Chicago, will be the keynote speaker for "Perpetuating the Family Business—The Ultimate Management Challenge." Write Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6; (519) 885-0220; fax (519) 885-0014.

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The Canada-based Catholic Organization for Development and Peace has launched a campaign to try and force Nike and Levi Strauss & Co. to allow independent monitoring of their subcontractors' factories. The organization says independent monitors are necessary to ensure that codes of conduct on child labor, fair wages, forced overtime and worker safety are enforced. In 1996, Development and Peace sent 86,000 petition signatures to Nike and 77,000 to Levi Strauss asking for independent monitoring. Already this year, collected signatures have exceeded last year's numbers. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Undergraduates at the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minn., have given new meaning to the word "model student." Last year during a nationwide protest against the clothing store The Gap for using sweatshop labor, students at St. Kate's held a mock fashion show. During lunch one day, they played music and walked down a runway set up outside the dining hall, wearing Gap clothes with large price tags bearing slogans such as "90 cents an hour is not a living wage." Hundreds of students saw the show, and 120 of them sent letters to The Gap, asking the company to adopt fair labor practices. All of them received responses and representatives of The Gap later visited the school twice. (*Salt of the Earth*)

Dave Linscheid

Right direction?: *General Board member Kathi Suderman, Aberdeen, Sask., listens while her son Jesse plays.*

sessions be held every three years.

The GB affirmed a rough outline for four program boards for the new denomination: a mission board overseeing international and domestic mission; a resources board covering at minimum the areas of worship, congregational education, peace and justice, publishing and stewardship; a leadership board to oversee pastoral services, lay leadership, seminaries and post-graduate theological education, and an education board to serve educational institutions.

Harder said he could agree to the concept if he knew the GBs would have the opportunity to review the details before presentation to delegates. GC moderator Darrell Fast, Newton, Kan., suggested that at this point the work was only a foundation, with walls yet to be built.

The GB approved "exploration of" the geographical paradigm to organize the denomination in four regions: Canada, U.S. East, U.S. Central and U.S. West. With the approval came counsel to pay attention to funding for the area conferences, the four regions and the denomination and to look closely at how the regions are represented on the new GB.

In final integration action, the board affirmed the dissolution of the two (GC and MC) General Boards, with creation of a new General Board in 1999, and voted to relay their decisions to the MC and CMC General Boards—which will consider the IC proposals in April and May, respectively—and to GC delegates for consideration in Winnipeg in July.

CMC at the table: Citing a need for further clarification of how CMC is to participate in integration planning, the GB amended a proposal that will go to the MC GB regarding future meetings. The proposal requests that meetings of the two GBs be held cooperatively from now on, and that "we also request your support in strengthening the presence at the table by CMC, by inviting representatives of their General Board executive committee to join these sessions and receive their counsel as non-voting members."

Other business: The GB also

- adopted a GC income budget for 1997 of $4,183,520, and a disbursement budget for the commissions and seminary of $4,296,898, allowing expenditures from reserves in order to maintain program;
- approved a new formula for distributing funds to the commissions and seminary beginning in 1998 and continuing until integration: 9.75 percent of the budget will go to the Commission on Education, 22.5 percent to the Commission on Home Ministries, 55.5 percent to the Commission on Overseas Mission, and 12.25 percent to AMBS (The rationale for the change was to maintain program as the GC works toward integration.);
- increased staff salaries by 3 percent—in part a response to information about differences between MC and GC salaries—with an approximate increase in health-care benefits of 5 percent;
- approved sending a joint MC-GC Mennonite Statement on Violence to GC delegates for consideration at conference sessions in July;
- announced that Dale Schrag, Newton, Kan., will begin July 1 as secretary for higher education, serving the GC Higher Education Council one-third time. Schrag will continue as director of church relations at Bethel College, North Newton. *Dave Linscheid*

Dave Linscheid

"It's a strong proposal."

Marian Franz

Integration dominates CHM agenda

Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC)—Integration issues topped the agenda of the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) board during the annual Council of Commissions held here March 15-17.

CHM and the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) spent a significant chunk of their first day of meetings gathering with their one-board Mennonite Church (MC) counterpart, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

After hearing an overview of structural changes proposed by the Integration Committee (see General Board article, page 13) from IC co-chair Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Bluffton, Ohio, the three boards spent their time in both large- and small-group sessions, where board members shared their priorities for mission and concerns about merger.

The historic gathering of the three boards gave members a chance to get to know and "put faces on" each other across denominational lines.

The report to CHM of Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) staff, who were joined by co-director Saul Murcia of MBM, focused largely on integration. The voluntary service programs of both CHM and MBM now operate under one name (MVS), carry out joint orientations for new volunteers and have just published their first joint service listing.

Gordon Janzen

MVS co-director Miles Reimer of CHM noted that 47 volunteers will conclude their assignments in the next nine months, most of them by the end of the summer. "We're scrambling [to fill the vacancies]," he said. "Integration has taken up a lot of time."

During the commissions' final plenary session on March 17, CHM chair Floyd Bartel, Newton, Kan., said, "A reality is that integrating programs [such as MVS] requires some progress integrating at all levels in order to keep moving forward with program. MVS needs a common budget, a common database, a common method for processing applicants and common job descriptions for staff.

"Right now, we are doubling the work of staff," he continued. "Instead of their being out recruiting volunteers and visiting units, they have to be in more meetings."

The board heard an emotional report from Hispanic Ministries director Gilberto Flores on the looming crisis for illegal immigrants in the United States, many of whom are Hispanic. Immigration laws change April 1, making it increasingly difficult for immigrants to obtain U.S. citizenship.

Flores also reported on the success of the Instituto Biblico Anabautista (IBA), or Anabaptist Biblical Institute, a program of lay leadership training in Hispanic churches in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Violeta Ajquejay gave the report on the progress of the Damascus Road anti-racism training program during 1996. Ajquejay is CHM staff representative on the GC Damascus Road team.

Board member Susan Ortman Goering, Boulder, Colo., asked how congregations can get involved in Damascus Road training. When it was noted that Damascus Road currently is set up for church institutions, not congregations, MVS associate director Chuck Neufeld, Markham, Ill., said, "Even if we all become more sensitized and convicted at the institutional level, we don't stand much chance of [permanently] dismantling racism in our institutions if we're not doing it in our congregations."

"Integration has taken up a lot of time."

Miles Reimer

Hugh and Janet Sprunger, Lancaster, Pa., who have coordinated Chinese and Asian ministries since 1992, have announced their intention to retire from the position. In their report to the CHM board, they stressed their belief in the need to "lay the mantle of responsibility on the shoulders of capable Chinese and Asian leaders." The board expressed its desire to make the discussion of "next steps" for Chinese and Asian Ministries a priority for the fall board meeting.

CHM passed a budget of $924,200 for 1997. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

The National Religious Partnership for the Environment unveiled a three-year, $4 million campaign Feb. 6 in Washington, designed to promote programs that recognize a connection between protecting the environment and advancing social issues. Toxic waste dumps and other environmentally hazardous operations are more likely to be located in poor neighborhoods where people do not have enough influence to stop them, religious leaders say. NRPE is a coalition of several major faith groups, including the U.S. Catholic Conference and the National Council of Churches. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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When Tom and Disa Rutschman first came (in 1977) to Jokkmokk, Sweden —a city where less than one percent of the population attends church on a given Sunday—they were surprised that not one school-age person they knew came from a Christian home or called themselves Christian. "The Bible study group we were a part of decided to do something about it, and the church's coffeehouse ministry began," Tom says. Two nights a week, between 30 and 50 young people pour into the Jokkmokk Frikyrka basement for a coffeehouse known as "Grottan" (The Cave). Through Ping-Pong, floor hockey or table games, the teenagers interact with each other and the Youth Evangelism Service teams from Eastern Mennonite Missions, who play a major role in the activities of the coffeehouse. Over the coffeehouse's 20 years, dozens of young people have come to faith; 15 have been baptized and joined the church. In 1996, more than 130 different youth participated in the activities, according to attendance records. The Rutschmans find the increased activity at Grottan encouraging, considering that in the past year Jokkmokk also has experienced "an explosion of interest in shamanism and other New Age spiritual expressions," Tom says. "Jokkmokk is an ancient Saami settlement, and the 'rediscovery' of shamanism could turn the city into a New Age center." (*Minnette B. Hostetler*)

The second Christian Writer's Seminar will be held April 26 at Woodland United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kan. Registration is discounted if received by April 15. Write or call Annette Wood, 1981 Anita, Wichita, KS 67217; (316) 942-0428.

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A number of Mennonite organizations are sponsoring a one-day consultation on issues of power and authority in the Mennonite church, May 24 at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont. Group size is limited. Registration is due April 15. Call Cheryl Nafziger-Leis at (519) 669-1970 for more information.

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Menno and Margaretha Ediger, Mission, B.C., were among seven people who participated in the MENNO (Mennonites Encountering New Neighbors Overseas) project in Colombia Feb. 1-15. The couple was impressed with the way the Colombian Mennonite Church has brought pacifism to the forefront of its work. For more information about the MENNO project contact Karen McCabe-Juhnke, Commission on Overseas Mission, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; (316) 283-5100.

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Evangelical Press News Service reports that 72 percent of conservative Christians in the United States agree that "Jews have a right to the land of Israel, since it was promised to them by God," according to a study by the American Jewish Committee. Forty-three percent of other Americans agreed with the statement. Also, 61 percent of self-identified members of the Religious Right say they support Israel, compared to 52 percent of other Americans. The survey also found that 79 percent of conservative Christians say homosexual groups have too much influence in America, 64 percent say atheists have too much, and 48 percent say they would support a constitutional amendment "declaring the United States a Christian nation." (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

Women's groups plan merger by August 1

Elkhart, Ind. (WM/WMSC)—The conventional wisdom at the General Conference Mennonite Church's (GC) annual Council of Commissions, held this year in Elkhart, was that "integration has gone on the fast track." Decisions about the GC and Mennonite Church (MC) women's groups seem to confirm this feeling.

The executive committees of the GC Women in Mission (WM) organization and the MC Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC), meeting jointly, approved a proposal that ends the current WM and WMSC structures and brings into existence a new, integrated women's organization on Aug. 1, 1997.

WM and WMSC members will respond to the proposal by mail-in ballot during April and May, with results reported at the GC sessions in Winnipeg July 6-8 and the MC assembly in Orlando, Fla., July 29-Aug. 2.

The proposal on which the women will vote includes a constitution, a slate of officers and a choice of two names.

The proposed constitution is a working document. The final constitution will be submitted for approval at joint GC-MC sessions in 1999 (tentatively scheduled for St. Louis).

The proposed joint executive committee will include officers, racial/ethnic representatives (a part of WMSC current structure) and regional representatives.

The two name choices proposed are Mennonite Women's Association and Mennonite Women.

At the joint GC-MC assembly in Wichita in 1995, WM and WMSC officers voted to proceed toward integration of the two organizations and created an integration exploration committee with representatives from both groups for that purpose.

The executive committees met together once before, in October 1996, to discuss integration issues (see "Women's Groups Continue Work of Integration," *The Mennonite*, Nov. 12, 1996, page 15).

"As we went along, we struggled over such things as geographic, racial/ethnic, rural/urban and age representation," said Liz Klassen, Kitchener, Ont., WM president. "Both WMSC and WM have a faith history. We recognize differences in our stories and experiences, but as Anabaptist women we are all serving and praising God."

Further proposed changes in the binational (U.S. and Canada) women's organizations affect publications and staff.

The executive committee took action to have an integrated communication piece (WM currently publishes *Window to Mission* and WMSC the *WMSC Voice*) in place by November. The annual study guide, already a joint publication, will continue.

During the summer and fall of 1997, current staff positions for WM and WMSC will end and new positions will be advertised and filled.

"It feels right for our women's organizations to become unified in our purpose and strategies," said WMSC president Susan Gingerich, Iowa City, Iowa. "We encourage women and women's groups to continue nurturing their lives in Christ through Bible study and fellowship, utilizing their gifts, hearing each other and engaging in mission and service. As we approach the year 2000, we hope to see women active in groups that bring encouragement and fulfillment."
Melanie A. Zuercher

DGS celebrates successful budget year

Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC)—A financial year in which the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) made over 100 percent of its budget set an upbeat tone for the Division of General Services (DGS) meeting, which was otherwise full of some of the more difficult nuts-and-bolts agenda of integration, including planning for personnel transition.

GC business manager and treasurer Ted Stuckey opened his report declaring, "It was a wonderful year financially for the General Conference." Stuckey reported that the conference had received $4,389,437 U.S., or 102.8 percent of anticipated income for 1996. The board reviewed information about income and expenditures, then made budget and salary recommendations to the General Board (see page 14).

The board discussed the report of the Personnel Transition Committee, recently formed by staff. The report touched on many issues, including communication in times of transition, maintaining staffing levels, medical insurance benefits, potential severance benefits, and salaries in the context of integration. The board affirmed the committee's work and will review specific proposals in the future, especially any related to severance benefits.

In other integration business,

- communications director Dave Linscheid reported progress toward creation of a directory to serve the GC, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC);
- the board approved and sent to the General Board plans for merging *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald*;
- Stuckey reported on the first round of talks among GC, MC and CMC staff about funding structures in the new denomination.

DGS welcomed new member Barry Bartel, Arvada, Colo., an attorney and a member of Arvada Mennonite Church. He replaces Connie Hart Yellowman, El Reno, Okla., who resigned. *Dave Linscheid*

COE affirms mission statement

Elkhart, Ind.(GCMC)—The Commission on Education (COE) developed a mission statement at its meetings here March 15-17.

The purpose of COE, according to its mission statement, is "equipping the church to communicate the gospel." While some board members affirmed its simplicity, Janelle Ortman, Marion, S.D., said it needs more specific content. "The American church is too generic; it has no meat to it."

COE later affirmed the mission statement and directed executive staff to draft a statement of support for Anabaptist principles and a statement to work at anti-racism and toward gender equality. These will be discussed at COE's fall meeting.

A year ago, directed by the Division of General Services, COE appointed a leadership task force to help supervise day-to-day management of Faith & Life Press after the press had asked for a loan from the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC). COE members and staff met in closed session to discuss the painful effects of staff and budget cuts. COE later offered a letter of apology to staff.

COE staff members Eleanor Snyder and Abe Bergen presented a concept of family ministry called "Child in Our Hands," which involves presenting new parents in a congregation a "faith chest" that includes resources for the parents and their child/children as they mature as a family.

Snyder, Bergen and Ken Hawkley also offered an "Education Area Staff Ministry Plan." COE members asked how to quantify the plan's goals and measure their effectiveness. COE accepted the report and encouraged staff to seek counsel and fine-tune the plan.

In other business, COE

- passed a budget of $386,875 for 1997;
- looked at and accepted business plans for Faith & Life bookstores in Berne, Ind., and Newton, Kan.;
- interacted with the GC Damascus Road team and received anti-racism training;
- agreed to set aside time at each board meeting to "look at the big picture" and offer feedback to staff;
- heard a proposal for a new adult curriculum, to be ready for fall 1998;
- celebrated completion of the first three years of the Jubilee curriculum;
- acknowledged and celebrated the contributions of Norma Johnson, who resigned Jan. 31 after nine years of service, and Susan E. Janzen, who resigns this summer after 14 years of service. *Gordon Houser*

Dave Linscheid

Integration business: *Janelle Ortman (left, COE) and Nancy Brubaker (CHM) talk during a plenary session.*

Not everyone has figured out the abbreviations for Mennonite institutions. A Mennonite Mutual Aid representative in Lancaster, Pa., recently sold insurance coverage to a client. The MMA counselor told the client to whom to make out the check and was surprised to receive a check made out to "Emma Mae." (*Gospel Herald*)

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Christian Community Health Fellowship, a national network of Christian health-care professionals and others concerned about the health-care needs of impoverished communities in the United States, will hold its annual national conference May 29-June 1 in Raleigh, N.C. Contact CCHF, P.O. Box 12548, Philadelphia, PA 19151-0548; (215) 877-1200; e-mail cchf@juno.com.

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In 1972, John Plummer set up an air strike on the village of Trang Bang, Vietnam, after having been assured twice there were no civilians in the area. Shortly after the strike, he saw the Pulitzer Prize-winning photo of 9-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc running naked and horribly burned by napalm from Trang Bang. Plummer was haunted by the photo and the overwhelming feelings of responsibility, which took a heavy toll on his relationships to his family and God. In 1990, Plummer says he "became a Christian," thanks to his second wife, Joanne. He eventually became pastor of Bethany United Methodist Church in Purcellville, Va. In 1996, Plummer happened to see a network news story about Kim Phuc, not only alive but married, converted from Buddhism to Christianity, the mother of a baby son and living in Toronto. In November 1996, Plummer met Kim Phuc at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. "All I could say was 'I'm sorry; I'm so sorry,' over and over again," says Plummer. "At the same time, she was saying, 'It's all right; it's all right; I forgive; I forgive.' She is the closest thing to a saint I ever met." (*Christian Century*)

The 29th annual Mid-Kansas Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale will be held April 11-12 at the Kansas State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson.

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The seventh annual "Celebration of Healing" for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse will be held May 30-31 at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind. Carolyn Holderread Heggen, Albuquerque, N.M., will be the keynote speaker. Survivors are invited to bring artwork for display at the event and to send submissions for a poetry booklet. Contact Celebration of Healing Task Force, P.O. Box 8007, South Bend, IN 46660; (219) 283-1308.

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The Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns board of directors, at its February meeting in La Verne, Calif., named Jim Sauder, Minneapolis, as the first BMC executive director. Sauder has served as BMC coordinator since 1989. The board also acted to change the status of the Supportive Congregations Network steering committee from that of a working committee of the board to a standing committee. The new status means that SCN steering committee members will now be full voting members of the BMC board.

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Hugo Zorilla, professor of biblical and religious studies and Spanish at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University, is part of a team of 17 men and women who have been working on the first new Spanish Bible translation for Latin America in more than 20 years. The New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs are now available with the remainder of the Old Testament scheduled to come out later this year. The project is sponsored by the International Bible Society, based in Colorado Springs, which also produced the New International Version. The Spanish-language Bible is a new translation, rather than a revision of an existing one, says Zorilla. (*Wayne Steffen*)

COM meets with MC counterpart

Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC)—The board of the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) spent the first hours of Council of Commissions, meeting here March 15-17, on integration issues.

A joint session involving COM, the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) and the Mennonite Church's Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) marked the first time that the full boards from the two denominations' mission agencies have met together.

At this "getting to know each other" session, a proposal by the Integration Committee to establish one integrated mission board, with both international and domestic mission programs, generated lively discussion.

"We are doing integration from the operational side—that is, from the bottom up, rather than from the top down," said COM chair Tom Lehman, Chapel Hill, N.C. "Much has happened faster than expected. There is still much to do, but it is exciting work."

Integration from the operational side: *Glendon Klaassen will resign May 31, 1998.*

Jeannie Zehr, secretary of mission communications for COM, spoke about some joint administrative programs already happening, such as COM, CHM and MBM staff joining to make promotional displays that look similar. "It had a tremendous team-building effect to work together with the other agencies. Integration is exciting, but it really takes a lot more time," said Zehr.

Larry Kehler, who is resigning this summer from his position as Asia secretary, received special recognition. Lehman also announced COM executive secretary Glendon Klaassen's intention to resign by May 31, 1998.

Peter Rempel, COM personnel director, reported that during the past year COM has sent out 27 new or returning workers and begun new work in five countries: Chile, Macau, Northern Ireland, Senegal and Thailand.

Rempel also introduced four couples appointed to assignments beginning this year. Abe and Chris Buhler, Burns Lake, B.C., are planning to return for a third term to Recife, Brazil, after five years in Canada.

Mike and Teresa Sherrill, Elkhart, will work in Japan, where both have previous experience. Mike Sherrill is completing a master of divinity degree at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and plans to do a year of study in missiology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., before the couple moves to Japan in mid-1998.

Two couples are being jointly appointed by COM and MBM for work in Latin America. Gretchen and Keith Kingsley, Elkhart, will teach Bible among northern Chaco indigenous people in Argentina. Mauricio and Sara Chenlo from Argentina will work in Bible teaching among indigenous church leaders in Ecuador.

COM also approved beginning work in Vietnam in partnership with Eastern Mennonite Missions, set to begin sometime in 1997.

Garry Prieb, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission executive secretary, expressed particular concern for the current situation in Zaire. He reported that there is tremendous unrest due to political and military change. "Pray for Zaire. It doesn't look good," he said. "The groups that offer the Zairians most hope today are the Mennonites, because of their traditional peace position."

Buddy and Lois Dyck, Elkhart, who returned recently from a six-month assignment in Botswana, reported that AIDS ministry has become a top priority in Southern Africa. Buddy Dyck reported that half the children under age 5 will be orphans by 2005 and that 50 percent of university students test HIV positive. "Rather than focusing on Bible teaching, as we expected to, most of our time was spent in AIDS ministries," he said.

Returning workers also reported on COM work: Peter and Sue Kehler on Ukraine; Elizabeth Soto Albrecht on Colombia; Russell Sawatsky on Japan; and Nilson and Mary Jane Assis on Brazil.

COM passed an expenditure budget of $2.9 million for 1997. *Gordon Janzen*

Moving?

Send us your new address.

Goshen College seeks applicants for a **part-time position in nursing**. Qualifications include graduate preparation and clinical skills applicable in various settings with a variety of client populations. Responsibilities include classroom, laboratory and clinical teaching; teaching sophomore and/or junior students in institutional and community settings, and may involve student recruitment and community-based practice. Men and people from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and professional references to: **John D. Nyce, Interim Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503**; fax **(219) 535-7660**; e-mail **johndn@goshen.edu**; web site: **www.goshen.edu**.

Goshen College seeks applicants for a full-time position in **adult health and acute care nursing**. Qualifications include master's degree (doctorate preferred) and teaching experience. Responsibilities include teaching two clinical courses and working with other faculty members in curriculum development, implementation and evaluation. Men and people from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

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Goshen College announces a part-time position for **baseball coach** for the 1997-98 school year. The person is responsible to coach and develop the men's baseball program—recruit quality athletes with Goshen College guidelines, plan, organize and implement schedule and budget. Master's degree preferred together with coaching experience suitable to the collegiate level. However, the load is concentrated between September and mid-October and between February and May, with about 30 percent contract load assigned. People from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and professional references to: **John D. Nyce, Interim Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503**; fax **(219) 535-7660**; e-mail **johndn@goshen. edu**; web site: **www.goshen.edu**. Screening of applicants begins **immediately** and the position remains open until filled.

Reference librarian: Master's degree in library science from ALA-accredited school, proficiency in library automated system(s), database searching and all aspects of professional reference service required. Responsibilities include: overall reference desk service, schedule desk coverage, supervision of student assistants and staff in serials library area. Must be committed to an Anabaptist/Mennonite faith understanding. AAEO employer. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

Send letter of application, resume, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to **William J. Hawk, VP and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.**

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On Saturday evenings in February, the Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., was transformed into the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in rural North Carolina in 1938, as members of the AMBS community presented the musical comedy "Smoke on the Mountain." "Smoke" tells the story of a family of musicians who present an evening of singing and testimonies at the church. Director June Alliman Yoder, who teaches preaching at AMBS, chose "Smoke" because it shows what worship used to be and demonstrates how it has changed. She called her seminary cast "the best I've ever worked with." Janeen Bertsche Johnson, AMBS director of continuing education, was musical director. After the first three performances sold out, a fourth show was added that sold out as well. (*Rebecca Yaeger*)

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Mennonite Board of Missions' award-winning "Stop the Violence" radio spots (Clips, March 25 issue, page 14) are part of a public-media campaign that also includes print ads and a public-service TV spot. The six free print ads encourage people to work with others in their neighborhood and become a part of a community of faith. One version—which churches can place to invite people to attend their services—was sent to all General Conference and Mennonite Church congregations and another, directed at the general public, to 1,000 magazines and newspapers in Canada and the United States with a request to editors to use them without charge as a public service to readers. The TV spot is aimed at adults—surveys have shown many children learn violent behavior from their parents or other adults. The 30-second spot demonstrates one way adults participate in the violence-teaching cycle. The Stop the Violence campaign was produced by Mennonite Media Ministries, a department of MBM in Harrisonburg, Va. For more information, call 1-800-999-3534.

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Teacher of English as a second language: Full-time continuing year-to-year appointment beginning late August 1997 to teach English to international students in the Intensive English Program. Master's degree in TESL or applied linguistics required. Experience desirable. Must be committed to an Anabaptist/Mennonite faith understanding. AAEO employer.

Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to **William J. Hawk, VP and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.**

Program director at Mennonite retreat center in Pocono Mountains of northeast Pennsylvania. Responsible for planning, leading and monitoring programs throughout the year. Should have Mennonite/Anabaptist perspective and be able to relate with enthusiasm to all ages. Salaried position to begin June 1997.

Send resume or contact **Paul Beiler, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; (717) 595-7505; fax (717) 595-0328.**

Nanny wanted: Looking for a mature individual to take care of two grade school-aged children and do light housekeeping. Salary negotiable, minimum $6/hour. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Wichita, Kan., near Maple and 119th St.

Call (316) 942-0422.

Hesston College: resident director for men's residence hall. The resident director will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff; assist in enforcement of campus standards and function as a member of the Student Life team. Qualifications include a strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite Church, leadership ability and good listening and confrontation skills. Applicants should be prepared to make a two-year commitment. Bachelor's degree preferred.

Apply to **Dean of Students, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062.** Application deadline: **April 11.**

Goshen College announces a part-time position for **women's tennis coach** for the 1997-98 school year. The person is responsible to coach and develop the women's tennis program—recruit quality athletes with Goshen College guidelines, plan, organize and implement schedule and budget. Master's degree preferred together with coaching experience suitable to the collegiate level. There is ongoing work throughout the year in administration, recruitment and instruction. However, the load is concentrated between late August and mid-October, with about 20 percent contract load assigned. Women and people from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and professional references to **John D. Nyce, Interim Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503; fax (219) 535-7660; e-mail johndn@goshen.edu; web site: www.goshen.edu.** Screening of applicants begins **immediately**; position remains open until filled.

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Rosthern Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Sask., invites applications for a full-time **youth pastor**. The position requires a mature, enthusiastic person who indicates a strong Christian faith and who can relate to youth in the church and community. Bible college graduate preferred.

Resumes should be mailed **by June 1** to the **Search Committee, Box 519, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0**.

Trinity Mennonite Church, a growing, urban church in South Calgary, is seeking a **pastor** to begin in mid- to late-1997. Applicants committed to an Anabaptist theology are invited to send their resumes to:

Pastoral Relations Committee, Joanne Wiens, Chair, #8-304 Cedar Crescent S.W., Calgary, AB T3C 2Y8.

Classroom teaching positions available at the **Chicago Mennonite Learning Center**. We are in search of classroom teachers for the 3rd/4th grade classroom, as well as the 7th/8th grade classroom. There is also a position combining library supervision and art instruction. These are full-time voluntary service positions. Housing, health insurance, living expenses and personal stipend are provided. Applicants with teacher training and experience will be given preference. There is also a part-time physical education teacher position available. This is a paid position and involves two days of work each week. Ten-month contract begins Aug. 18, 1997.

For more information or to request application materials, contact **Marvin Friesen, Principal, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632; (773) 735-9304**.

Hinkletown Mennonite School, Ephrata, Pa., is accepting applications for a part-time (75%) **music teacher** for the 1997-98 school year. HMS serves grades K-8. Duties include all grade levels, 7th and 8th grade chorus, various student programs and sponsor of student council. In addition to school assignments, private vocal and instrumental lessons may be provided. HMS uses a Kodaly-based curriculum.

Submit letter of application, resume, placement file including letters of recommendation, and official transcripts to **Mr. Richard Amstutz, Hinkletown Mennonite School, 272 Wanner Road, Ephrata, PA 17522-9314**.

First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., seeks full-time **associate pastor**. Ministry will focus on young adults and young families, evangelism and outreach, and Christian education.

Reply to **Don Schmidt, Search Committee Chair, First Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 291, Newton, KS 67114**.

Goshen College announces a job opening for a **director of public relations**. Responsibilities include developing public relations initiatives and marketing campaigns and overseeing publications and news operations, in conjunction with the enrollment, development and constituency relations directors and the office of the president. Qualifications include B.A. (master's preferred), minimum of five years of PR experience; managerial, organizational, verbal and writing skills; knowledge of graphic design and emerging technologies; ability to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines. Women and people from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and three references to **Kent Stucky, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7638**; fax: **(219) 535-7660**; e-mail: **kentds@goshen.edu**; web site: **www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be received until the position is filled.

Goshen College seeks applicants for **business manager** beginning July 1, 1997. The business manager reports to the provost and is a member of the President's Council. The business manager is responsible for all business of the college, including budgeting, financial reporting and forecasting, facilities management, auxiliary services, purchasing, accounts payable and risk management. The candidate should have an M.B.A. degree or its equivalent, and experience in accounting and business affairs in a college or university is preferred. The business manager must have strong leadership and communication skills, good problem solving skills, the ability to work collegially with staff and faculty and represent the college to the public. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Applications from women and people from under-represented groups are strongly encouraged.

Send a letter of application, resume, a philosophy of business management, unofficial transcripts and three professional references to **John D. Yordy, Provost, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7501**; fax: **(219) 535-7660**; e-mail: **provost@goshen.edu**; web site: **www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be accepted until May 1 or the position is filled.

First Mennonite Church in Burns Lake, B.C., is an established congregation inviting applications for the position of full-time **pastor** starting this summer/fall. Burns Lake is a community of 2,500 set in the scenic Lakes District of central British Columbia.

Please submit your resume to **Pastor Search Committee, c/o Gerald Dyck, RR 1, Site 1B, Comp 4, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1B0**.

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FILMS

DISTURBING TRUTH

Rosewood, *written by Gregory Poirier, produced by Jon Peters, directed by John Singleton, rated R*

Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editor

Be warned: This is not a movie to go to for entertainment. It is one of the most disturbing movies I have seen. Yet it needs to be seen.

Based on a true story, the film shows the events over a few days in the small town of Rosewood, Fla., in the early 1920s. Except for Mr. Wright (Jon Voight), a widower who owns the general store, his new wife and two sons, the residents of Rosewood are all African-Americans. They have achieved a measure of economic stability and peace, given the times.

The times are not good. Poor whites live in nearby Sumner. The trouble begins when a young white woman, beaten by her white lover, goes outside her house and screams that a "nigger" was the perpetrator. Despite the efforts of the local sheriff, a mob soon forms. They go to Rosewood, and the lynching and murder proceed.

Earlier in the movie, Mr. Mann (Ving Rhames), a veteran of World War I, rides into Rosewood on his horse, Booker T., and is soon welcomed by the community. Mr. Wright resents this black man's presence, but in the end they need each other to help rescue the few women and children who survive the massacre. Their reconciliation, however small, is one sign of hope in the film.

Rosewood shows how the demonic evil of racism infects a group and leads them to commit unconscionable acts of violence. At the same time, it shows how racism is not innate but learned. One father tells his young son not to play with his black friend anymore. Later he forces the boy to look at the pile of dead bodies, victims of the mob's rampage, then tells him to be a man and not cry.

The film depicts various aspects of racism—economics, for example. The poor whites resent the blacks, who live in nicer houses. One man says, "That nigger even has a piano. I don't have a piano." His friend reminds him that he can't even play the piano. Doesn't matter, the man says.

As Will Campbell has observed, poor whites have carried out most of the overt violence against blacks, while the richer whites have benefited.

Having been reading the book *Schindler's List*, I kept seeing parallels between the experience of Jews in Europe and African-Americans in the United States. There were some "righteous Gentiles" who helped rescue Jews; there seemed to be fewer righteous whites who helped rescue blacks.

Demonic violence: *Jon Voight helps women and children escape a massacre in the town of Rosewood.*

Except for a few scenes that rang false from overdoing stereotypes, *Rosewood* has a powerful impact because of its realistic portrayal of a horrible event. The writing, acting (especially by Voight, Rhames and the children) and John Singleton's fine direction force us to face the truth of what happened to this community. Even more searing is the fact that this was not an isolated incident but one of hundreds.

BOOKS

VISION FOR EVANGELICALS

Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J.I. Packer, *edited by Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath (InterVarsity, 1996, 280 pages, $22.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by David Bartow, Zionsville, Pa.

This book contains a series of articles by friends of J.I. Packer who were invited to submit articles on the occasion of Packer's 70th birthday and his retirement from full-time teaching at Regent College in Vancouver. The editors challenged Packer's friends "to be visionary: specifically, to set out an agenda for evangelical theology over the next several decades." The book contains 15 articles under three areas of theology (systematic, biblical and

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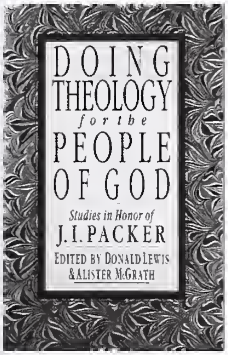
exegetical; historical and interdisciplinary), some biographical background on J.I. Packer, and "A Select Bibliography of J.I. Packer's Works."

The challenge set before these writers is not easy. Evangelical theology is diverse. This particular book represents the segment of evangelical theology that defends inerrancy of Scripture. But even within that group there is diversity. How can anyone set an agenda for all of evangelical theology?

The writers of the articles in this book responded well to the challenge. There is good scholarship and innovative thinking in them that will stimulate all theologians to work at an agenda for the next several decades. While I am not one who defends biblical inerrancy, I found much to challenge and stimulate me as I work at my own theological agenda.

The editors describe J.I. Packer as one who "has sought to serve the church, the whole people of God. Like so many great theologians, he has been drawn into controversy out of pastoral concerns, intensely aware of the fact that bad theology damages people. He has sought, however, in all the controversies in which he has been involved, to be a peacemaker and a true Christian ecumenist." The articles in this book are written in that spirit. This makes the book a good contribution to the Christian dialogue that seeks to bring about unity within the body of Christ.


DOING THEOLOGY *for the* PEOPLE OF GOD
Studies in Honor of
J.I. PACKER
EDITED BY DONALD LEWIS & ALISTER McGRATH

HARD CHOICES

Bioethics: A Primer for Christians *by Gilbert Meilaender (Eerdmans, 1996, 120 pages, $10 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Joseph J. Kotva Jr., Allentown, Pa.

Medicine has always been fertile ground for moral reflection and hard choices. Modern medicine, with its many technological advances, tempts us to leave such moral reflection to the specialists ("bioethicists"). This book rejects that temptation and challenges us to think about what ordinary Christians striving to be faithful to Jesus should say when we "turn to the contemporary concerns of bioethics."

The book is well written and offers easily understandable discussions of various moral problems and terms in bioethics. Problems discussed range from issues in reproductive technologies to euthanasia to human experimentation.

Despite Meilaender's good intentions and accessible writing style, I am uncertain whether to recommend the book as an introduction to bioethics. It is a nice summary of his positions on numerous issues and some sections are helpful. For example, in the chapter on refusing medical treatment, he uses several illustrations to show that we normally recognize a significant moral "difference between the intention or aim of an action and the result of an action." This recognition is important because it clarifies the moral difference between killing and allowing to die: the former aims at the patient's death, the latter realizes that death may result, but death is not the aim.

I have two main reservations about the book. First, as a "primer for Christians," biblical texts and themes from Christian theology are surprisingly scarce. A proof-text approach would be inappropriate, but there are many relevant images and themes from Scripture and theology that Meilaender leaves untouched.

Second, the entire volume has a tone of caution, perhaps even mistrust and apprehension. Each chapter is not so much about what we ought to do as about what we ought not to do (make use of most reproductive technologies, abortion, most forms of genetic manipulation, routine prenatal screening, suicide, euthanasia, living wills, etc.). Many specific judgments are correct, but the tone is disturbing. There is little here about the good or values of medicine, about the virtues we should be encouraging in our doctors or ourselves, about the kinds of care we should strive for through medicine. Even the chapter on organ donation is overwhelmingly negative in tone and leaves unused the image of gift-giving that appears in the chapter title ("Gifts of the Body").

Still, there is much to commend here. If it is not the only book one reads on bioethics, and if one adjusts for its negative tone, it is well worth picking up.

Resources

- **Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts: Building Up the Body of Christ Through the Gifts of the Spirit** by Charles V. Bryant (Upper Room, 1991, $9.95 U.S.) identifies and discusses 30 spiritual gifts and how to use these gifts to build the church.
- **Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts: A Workbook** by John I. Penn (Upper Room, 1996, $5.95 U.S.) is a seven-week study for individuals and groups to help us recognize our own spiritual gifts.
- **My Father's Prayer: A Remembrance** by Phyllis Tickle (Upper Room, 1995, $12.95 U.S.) is the story of her father's prayer, which took the shape of a crocheted coverlet made from 1937 to the end of World War II.
- **Fire, Salt, and Peace: Intentional Christian Communities Alive in North America** by David Janzen (Shalom Mission Communities, 1996, $14.95 U.S.) tells what happened to the Christian communities of the 1970s, why some failed, how new groups continue to develop.
- **When God Says No: Discovering the God of Hope Behind the Answer We'd Rather Not Hear** by Leith Anderson (Bethany House, 1996, $10.99 U.S.) explores how we continue when all hope has gone and God has said no.
- **Emmaus Eyes: Worship with the Mentally Challenged** by Lo-Ann and David Trembley (Eden Publishing, 1996, $14.95 U.S.) includes worship ideas to help meet the needs of everyone in the church community, including the mentally handicapped. To order call 1-800-699-9911.
- **Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life** by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat (Scribner, 1996, $27.50 U.S.) collects more than 650 examples of the spiritual in things, nature, work, body, illness, death, community and more.
- **Beyond Black and White: Reflections on Racial Reconciliation** by George A. Yancey (Baker Books, 1996, $12.99 U.S.) offers practical ways to address racism in our communities.

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Editorial

Blessed are the dying

Dying—our own or that of a loved one—brings us face to face with our limits. We soon realize we cannot control all that much. And the many anxieties that earlier consumed us each day now drift away like smoke, burned away by an all-consuming concern about our life and God.

When I encounter someone like Judy Schroeder Tomlonson (see page 3), I come away with a better understanding of freedom. Here is someone not being controlled by trivialities. Their concern is with ultimate issues; their time on earth is short.

Having just come through Lent and celebrated Jesus' resurrection, perhaps we have looked at death from afar. Have we moved too quickly to the resurrection, to the cessation of our troubles? Can we experience resurrection without going through some kind of death?

In his book *Job and the Mystery of Suffering* (Crossroad, 1996), Richard Rohr writes, "An awful lot of religion is an excuse for not facing our fears and doubts. True religion is not denial but transformation." We want to worship a God who conquers suffering so that we don't have to experience it. But Jesus reveals a different way to understand God. We worship One who does not rescue us from suffering or death but goes through it with us and, in some mysterious way, transforms us.

> ***We worship One who does not rescue us from suffering or death but goes through it with us and, in some mysterious way, transforms us.***

This is difficult to hear, especially for the majority of us who live fairly comfortably and don't want to hear such statements. However, Rohr writes, "untested faith tends to produce a very mechanistic and impersonal spirituality," while mature faith "almost always has a quality of paradox and mystery about it—as if to leave room for the freedom of God." We like to fit God into our pocket, make God into a servant who does our bidding. But God is free.

If we pay attention to God's work through history, we keep encountering the poor and suffering. And if we're honest, we will notice our own awareness of God's presence intensify when we lose hold of the props that make life comfortable.

Look at Job, for example. He has lost everything, has nothing more to lose but his life. In that freedom he calls upon God for justice, certain that justice will mean his vindication. "When people are oppressed," Rohr writes, "they know that the current system is not from God. They have little to lose and everything to gain by seeking justice."

The Lord's Prayer: Many of us, however, tend to hesitate asking for justice, because we realize that justice will mean our losing some privileges and possessions we have learned to take for granted. Thus we are not free to pray the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done."

I do not intend to romanticize suffering or death. Neither is pleasant. Yet the mystery remains that resurrection comes through suffering and death. In this Easter season, as we celebrate Jesus' victory over death, let us remember that that victory came through the cross.

Resurrection is meant to be a lived reality—now, not just some future time in another realm. But unless we hear and obey Jesus' call to take up our cross, i.e., face our death, and follow him (Mark 8:34), we cannot experience the resurrection life God offers us.

How do we face our death and follow Jesus? There is no specific formula. God will speak to us through the Scriptures, through our own experiences and through those around us who are suffering. We are called to listen to the Spirit, place ourselves with the poor and shed any illusions that we are blessed because things are going well for us. Jesus said the opposite: "Blessed are you who are poor, … who are hungry now, … who weep now" (Luke 6:20-21).

These words are difficult to hear in a culture that repeats the opposite message every day. We will need vigilance and the help of one another to pay heed to Jesus' words and to Jesus' way.

Blessed are the dying, the grieving, who thereby gain a glimpse of the resurrection life God wants us all to experience. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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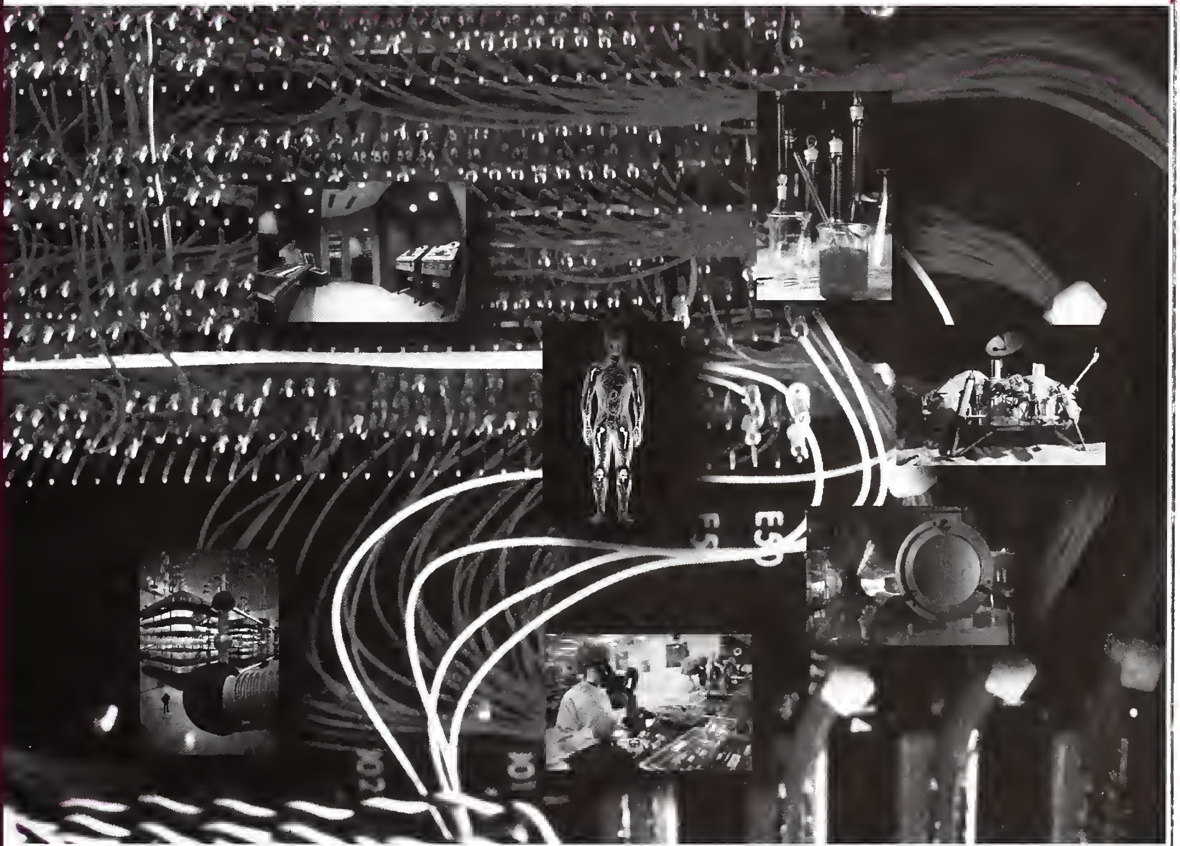


IN A TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

How to share the gospel with the technological 'haves' (page 3)

Improved means to an unimproved end (page 6)

Create a web page for your church (page 9)

Prologue

Changes in technology occur at an increasingly rapid rate. These changes happen so fast that it's difficult to take the time to examine each one and ask ourselves whether or not we should make use of it.

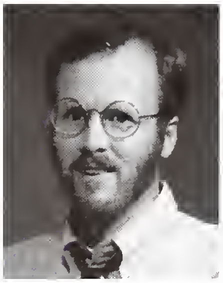
This issue asks some questions about technology. Robert Ramseyer looks back on his experience as a missionary in Japan (page 3) and asks, How do we share the gospel in a technological age?

Emerson Wiens reflects more directly on technology—what it is, what its dangers are and how it relates to our faith (page 6). He goes on in his poem "Ode to America" (page 8) to satirize our consumption-based lifestyles.

Don Harting takes a more practical approach (page 9). Rather than examining in depth the appropriateness of computer technology, he explains how someone can create a web page for a congregation.

In Part II of her Bible study series, Lois Barrett (page 11) looks at healthy boundaries and asks what should define Mennonite identity today.

J.B. Miller (page 12) passes on several financial tips ("golden rules") that he has gleaned from a book by John M. Templeton.



The West Bank continues to be a hot spot, and Mennonites are there, trying to help make peace (page 13). Another place of conflict and suffering is Zaire, home to many Mennonites (page 18). Pray for the people in these areas. *gh*

Next issue: The work of the General Conference Mennonite Church

Cover: Design by John Hiebert

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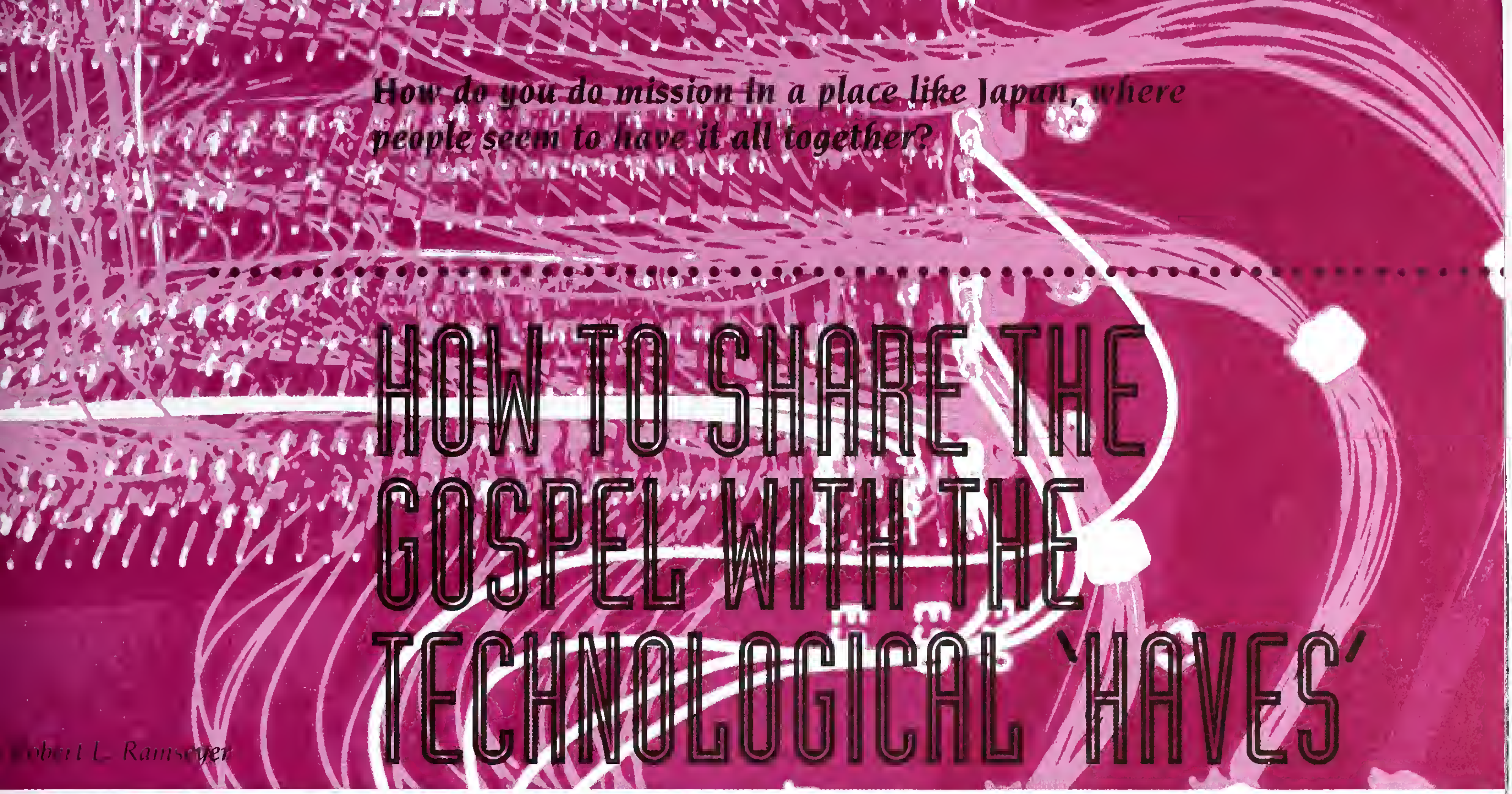


How do you do mission in a place like Japan, where people seem to have it all together?

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THE TECHNOLOGICAL 'HAVES'

obert L. Ramseyer

Already in the 1960s visitors from North America coming to our home in Japan often asked, "What do you do as missionaries in Japan? The Japanese people seem to have everything that we have in North America. What can you do for them?"

That's a good question. What can we do for people in Japan? Certainly not many of the things we often think of missionaries doing in "mission lands." We can't go to Japan and try to demonstrate God's love by building schools, by setting up hospitals and sending physicians and nurses, by feeding the hungry, by caring for orphans. Japan seems to be a society that has it all together, a society in which people feel safe and secure, a proud society in which people feel they have solved their own problems and do not need help from outsiders, a society in which people feel they have satisfactory answers to their questions about the meaning of life. People in Japan are not consciously asking questions to which Jesus is the obvious answer. Why should we send missionaries to such a society, and what do we expect them to do when we do send them?

Obviously we expect missionaries to share the gospel, the good news that the God who created us and all that is also loves us and wants what is best for us. That is good news for all human beings. God loves us so much that God came to be with us as a human being, showing us that we can be forgiven and fully accepted in God's love. The world God made is a world created to operate on the basis of love, and we do not need to live in fear. This is good news for all human beings regardless of the society in which we live. But then the question is, How can this good news be shared so that it can be seen and received as good news, not as some foreign idea that someone is trying to persuade us to accept?

If we really want to be followers of Jesus Christ, then we need to ask what Jesus did when he came in mission. Obviously Jesus did not exclude people who seemed to be satisfied and prosperous as if they did not need the message he brought. Jesus brought good news to all people, people with obvious problems and people whose needs were less obvious. Moreover, Jesus made his message straightforward. He didn't change it so that it would seem to fit whatever people thought they wanted.

Mutual trust: In following Jesus, what does it mean to be a missionary in a place like Japan? Mission not only brings into question what we do, it also raises questions about who or what we are. Mission demands a situation of mutual trust among people. It calls us to be as open and vulnerable as possible. This may well be easier in a cross-cultural mission situation than in a setting where we are more at home and confident. Mission demands that we be humble and nondefensive, but when we are tempted to take pride in our humility and nondefensiveness, we often find that the people around us don't consider us humble, just slow and dull in our understanding. We seem to know so little about how to act, and we make so many mistakes.

Once in our early years in Japan, after Alice Ruth had worked long and hard on a short devotional message in Japanese and felt a bit proud of her accomplishment, she was told that it was good, for someone at a kindergarten level. After we had been working in the church for several years, we

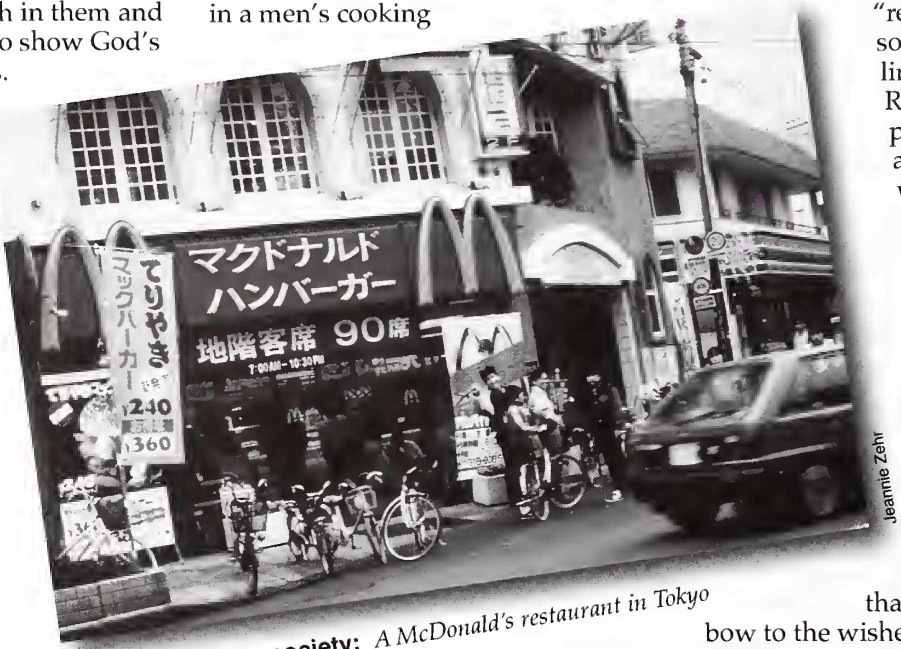
In Japan we are forced to focus on what is central in Christian mission, sharing the good news and building the church, something missionaries and Japanese Christians can and should do together.

discovered that church members' nickname for Bob was something that might be rendered in English as "cute little Ramseyer."

In this setting it would be difficult to take oneself seriously, and missionaries who do so and feel a need to be in control tend not to last long. In mission we try to show people that we trust them and have faith in them and their abilities as we try to show God's love in our relationships.

This is a matter of both being and doing. We cannot go to a country like Japan and try to act as if we were experts. People in Japan do not need the help of experts from abroad. In Japan we are forced to focus on what is central in Christian mission, sharing the good news and building the church, something missionaries and Japanese Christians can and should do together. In preaching, leading Bible study groups and helping new churches come into being, missionaries model what Japanese Christians can do, and in a country where Christians are still few, missionaries encourage Christians to be evangelists and church planters. This means that we as missionaries try to teach and preach in ways that others also can, even without specialized training. One of the most encouraging aspects of our time in Hiroshima is the way people are taking responsibility in leading Bible study groups since we have left.

Missionaries can also model and teach and learn by placing themselves in nonhierarchical relationships or in learning relationships under others, enrolling in a Japanese sewing class, or in a men's cooking class, for example.



Overwhelmed by society: *A McDonald's restaurant in Tokyo*

"But isn't it a waste of money and human resources to send people from North America to do essentially what Japanese Christians can do, probably better than a missionary can? Granted the number of Japanese Christians is small, but even so." Is there something unique a missionary brings, even to a society that has it all together?

The missionary brings a special gift to the church, the gift of a perspective that comes from a different society, a different culture. An outsider sees things differently, things someone reared in that society does not see. The outsider can see new ways the church can contribute to society.

Religion box: Every society has a box for something called "religion." In Japanese society that box and its limits are clear. Religion means personal beliefs about a divine being and what one does for personal spiritual enrichment. Here there is complete freedom. But if Christian faith also speaks to what one does and what one believes the social order should be, then Christian faith comes into conflict with a social principle that says minorities must bow to the wishes of the majority, and it is selfish and inconsiderate of a Christian to refuse to quietly and obediently follow what the majority wants. In this setting, the missionary can bring an outside perspective, encouraging and strengthening the church in its refusal to simply be another religion, in its refusal to fit into society's religion box.

The missionary also represents the support and encouragement of Christians from around the world. A small,

What is the good news in a society where city streets are far safer than streets in most North American cities and towns?

isolated minority can easily be overwhelmed by the society around it, but missionaries, by their presence, are a constant reminder that there is a worldwide church that transcends all local societies, a worldwide church concerned about the church in Japan.

So what does mission mean in Japan? What is the good news that we share in a society that has no need for our schools and hospitals, no need for our good works in ministry to orphans or homeless, no need for help in economic development? What is the good news in a society where city streets are far safer than streets in most North American cities and towns? How do we show people in Japan the good news of the gospel?

Lesslie Newbigin has written an essay entitled, "The Congregation as Hermeneutic of the Gospel." In ordinary English that might mean, "You want to know what the good news of the gospel is? Look at the local congregation and see." In Japan we are forced to do what ought to be obvious anywhere. The clearest demonstration, the clearest example of God's love in our world is the assembly of God's people, the local congregation. This is where God's love in action is most clearly seen.

They have it all together: *Main Street in Fukuoka, Japan*

Glendon Klaassen

Forgiveness and freedom: This is especially important in a society such as Japan, where people feel caught between the demands of traditional society (family, community) on the one hand and the work place on the other. Here the church as an alternative society offers love and acceptance, forgiveness and freedom from guilt and shame for failing to meet all that society demands. Because Christians in the congregation are conscious of having been forgiven by God through Jesus Christ, they are able to forgive each other, to love and support each other, to restore broken relationships. In Japan this is good news indeed.

Insofar as the congregation in Japan is rooted in Jesus Christ, fully committed to Jesus' way, and at the same time rooted in the Japanese community, the gospel the congregation expresses will be fully relevant to people in Japan. As missionary jargon puts it, the gospel will be fully contextualized. The members of the congregation will be committed to helping each other live as faithful Christians, as disciples of Jesus in Japan. In its life the congregation will demonstrate, in ways people can see, what a Japanese society made up of people filled with God's love and guided by God's Spirit is like.

And it is clear that this gospel is good news to people in Japan. Over and over again Christians in Japan report that they were first drawn to the Christian faith by what they saw in the life of a group of local Christians. They saw in the life of that local congregation what they had been looking for, often without realizing it. Ultimately this is what Christian mission among a people who have it all together is about.

Robert L. and Alice Ruth Ramseyer served more than 30 years since 1954 as missionaries to Japan under the Commission on Overseas Mission. They are now retired and living in Elkhart, Ind.

Reflections on technology and Christianity

IMPROVED MEANS TO AN UNIMP

A. Emerson Wiens

Church literature does not say much about the effects of our technological choices on quality of life or on Christianity. When concerns about these choices are addressed, it is usually in the context of environmental damage. The social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of our love affair with technology are often not addressed.

What is our God? In his book *The Culture of Cynicism*, Richard Stivers addresses what he calls the decline of morality in America. He blames much of this on our use of and faith in technology. He writes, "By the 20th century technology was beginning to supersede money as the chief sacred [cow] of Western civilization." He adds that we have come to believe "that technology as ultimate power is the solution to all problems."

In Acts 19 the silversmith Demetrius makes shrines to the pagan god Artemis, complaining that the apostle Paul is telling people that "gods made by hands are not gods."

Has technology replaced God or just modified the way we perceive God?

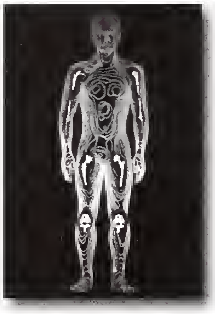
What we want: Most of us want money and technology not so much for their own sake but for what they provide for us. Both are means to ends. We take technologies like automobiles and telephones, insulin and MRIs so for granted that we could not imagine our world without them. We have become increasingly dependent on these technologies for achieving health, success, happiness and self-gratification. Many of us Christians are more caught up in living a certain consumptive lifestyle than in living the Sermon on the Mount.

Have our means—the tools we call technology—become ends in themselves? Or have the technologies under our control made us feel omnipotent, with no need for God?

I want to offer five observations regarding technology in society.

1. Americans are dependent on technology. We need only imagine a world without electricity, automobiles and telephones to understand this dependency.

2. Technology is being created and accepted at an accelerating pace. New technologies are applied to every imaginable field of human endeavor. For example, the laser has over 250 uses in diverse applications, from leveling ceiling tile to removing tonsils and reading UPC codes at the supermarket. New technologies are accepted by the public almost immediately after they surface from the research and development lab. Consider the immediate success of the compact disk player and the personal computer.



3. Most people have an unquestioning faith in technology. This may be because we have all benefited so much from it, especially in the areas of physical comfort, convenience and health. But this noncritical attitude may be because people do not consider the next observation.

4. Our technological choices have changed us and our society. Like most technologies, nuclear energy in itself is neither good nor bad; its effects depend on how it is used—to kill cancer cells or to kill people. Nevertheless, it is not neutral in that it has changed society forever. Never before has humankind had the power to totally destroy all human life and much other life on earth. All major inventions have changed our society forever: the telephone, the automobile, mass production, the computer. We will never go back to a society without these technologies.

In 1887, a German sociologist compared the societies of the pre-industrial age and the industrial age. He described pre-industrial society as "Gemeinshaft," meaning a society in which people have a strong sense of community and relate to each other in a personal way. By contrast, he called industrial society "Gesellshaft," a society in which people think of themselves as individuals first and typically relate to each other in an impersonal manner, on the basis of social roles, and therefore become alienated from each other.

In this sense, the automobile has been central

VED END

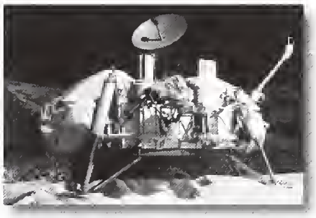
Much of the lifestyle we enjoy, rich with technology use, has not been inherited from our parents as much as borrowed from our children.

to the deterioration of community because people do not have to live near their places of employment or shop at the neighborhood stores, which have now become nearly extinct, and they do not have to interact with their neighbors. Many people have never met or talked with their next-door neighbors. Christ's admonishment to "love your neighbor as yourself" often gets lost in this type of self-centered, individualistic society. Christians should be concerned about the personal isolation and loss of community enhanced by our technological choices.

Loss of tradition: A second way technology has affected us is in the loss of tradition and ritual. Our society focuses on the here and now, with little interest in the past. While some traditions may be obstacles to Christian growth, others are essential for preserving our Christian and Mennonite heritages as well as our family and community values.

But which traditions are worth preserving? And which rituals, if any, have replaced the old ones? "Consumption," writes Stivers, "cannot offset the loss of tradition." Social and psychological effects of technological choices are typically ignored in government technology assessments but should not be ignored in our own.

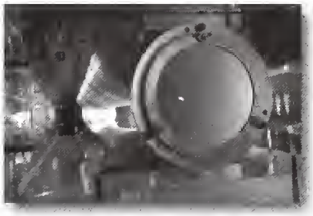
Most major technologies have positive and negative trade-offs, although many people focus only on the positive because of our dependence on them. Within our own faith a number of people have strong environmental concerns and take a more deterministic and critical view of technology. In many cases changes have been or are being made to combat some of the negative effects of our technology uses. For example, automobile accidents per million passenger miles have dropped dramatically as safety features have been added to cars and roadways made safer. However, technological cures for technological problems may in themselves cause more problems. There is so much we do not understand about how our bodies and our environment work and how our technologies will affect both.



Attention spans: A third way technology works against the church community is in its contribution to our fast-paced society, in which our attention spans have shortened and our senses seem to need constant stimulation. Who has time to meditate in this kind of world? Who has time to "wait on the Lord"?

5. Much of the lifestyle we enjoy, rich with technology use, has not been inherited from our parents as much as borrowed from our children.

- What we consume now will not be available for our children. Studies have shown that it is impossible for all people in the world to live at our level of consumption in North America; the natural resources would be gone in no time, and the pollution would be devastating.



- Much of our pollution of the air, soil and water now will be left to our children to clean up.
- Many scientists believe we are conducting a dangerous chemical experiment in that the smoke from our fossil fuels—from vehicles, power plants and industrial plants, and our destruction of forests—is causing a great build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Most scientists believe this will lead to global warming with resulting lowland flooding, more droughts and other devastating climate changes. Some think it will trigger an ice age.

Conclusions: Without technology our society would not have the agricultural output we enjoy, and our life expectancy would be half what it is now. Technology enhances our lives and diminishes our lives.

We hear much hype for every new technology, from Stealth bombers to small-dish satellite cable television and cordless phones. Most of the hype is designed to encourage us to buy it or buy into it. We need to become more comprehensive in our appraisal of new technologies in regard to their social, psychological and spiritual effects. We need to ask ourselves many questions:

- Will the technology help us address problems in society or add to them? For example, technology is basically ineffectual in reducing the causes of the drug culture, gang violence, breakdown of the family, teenage mothers, racism, terrorism, war, mental illness and starvation.
- Will it help us maintain important traditions or destroy them?
- Will it strengthen the family and the fellowship or will our interests be diverted?

continued on next page

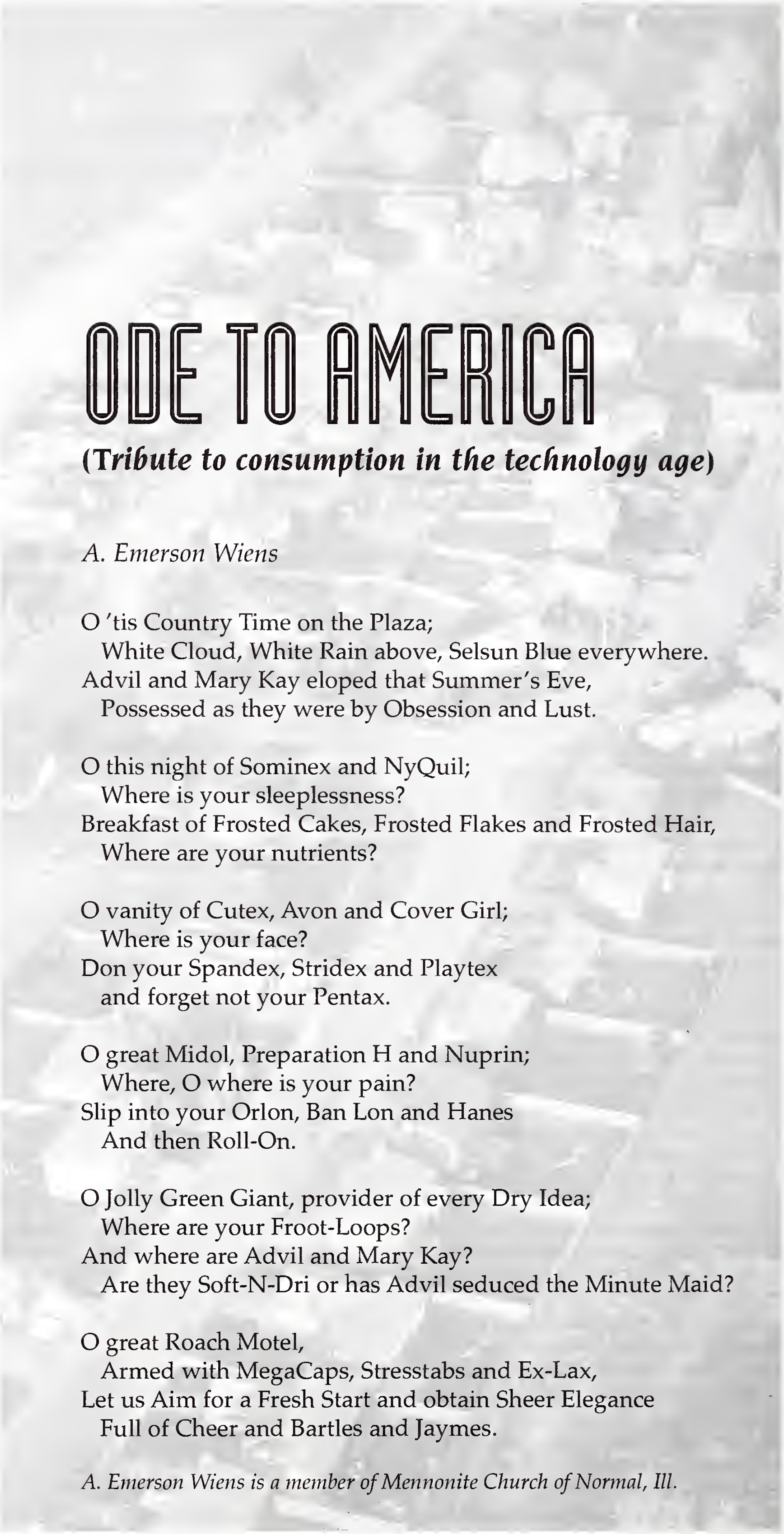
As Christians, we must focus on the appropriate ends and not become so fascinated by the machines and toys.

- Will it tend to isolate people more or strengthen our social interaction and consensus?
- Are there ways to encourage the positive uses and reduce the negative effects?

Henry Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end."

As Christians, we must focus on the appropriate ends and not become so fascinated by the machines and toys. We need to remember the words of the apostle Paul: "Gods made with hands are not gods." In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ admonished us to address the physical, social and spiritual needs in our society. Technology can help us do part of this, but in other ways it distracts our attempts at following these instructions. Let us as a Christian community examine the many technologies around us with open but discerning minds, and engage each other in discussion about how our technology choices will affect our Christian communities and ourselves.

A. Emerson Wiens has taught industrial technology at the college level for more than 30 years, first at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and now at Illinois State University in Normal. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave. The full text is available from the author (e-mail wiens@indtech.it.ilstu.edu).



ODE TO AMERICA

(Tribute to consumption in the technology age)

A. Emerson Wiens

O 'tis Country Time on the Plaza;
  White Cloud, White Rain above, Selsun Blue everywhere.
Advil and Mary Kay eloped that Summer's Eve,
  Possessed as they were by Obsession and Lust.

O this night of Sominex and NyQuil;
  Where is your sleeplessness?
Breakfast of Frosted Cakes, Frosted Flakes and Frosted Hair,
  Where are your nutrients?

O vanity of Cutex, Avon and Cover Girl;
  Where is your face?
Don your Spandex, Stridex and Playtex
  and forget not your Pentax.

O great Midol, Preparation H and Nuprin;
  Where, O where is your pain?
Slip into your Orlon, Ban Lon and Hanes
  And then Roll-On.

O Jolly Green Giant, provider of every Dry Idea;
  Where are your Froot-Loops?
And where are Advil and Mary Kay?
  Are they Soft-N-Dri or has Advil seduced the Minute Maid?

O great Roach Motel,
  Armed with MegaCaps, Stresstabs and Ex-Lax,
Let us Aim for a Fresh Start and obtain Sheer Elegance
  Full of Cheer and Bartles and Jaymes.

A. Emerson Wiens is a member of Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill.

CREATE A WEB PAGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

Here's why and how you can do it.

Don Harting

Congregations everywhere are using the World Wide Web. When your church constructs a home page on the web, it's like having a computerized bulletin board that anybody can visit for your latest church news. By updating your home page regularly, you provide parishioners with an electronic newsletter that saves the expense of printing and mailing.

Spinning your church's web: Here's how church programs can benefit from a web page.

Example: The leader of the men's ministry could create a page and use it to post news or service opportunities as well as to promote various speakers or concerts. If your parish serves college students, your outreach team can build a page geared especially to them. Many schools already have internet connections available for student use.

Staying in touch with your congregation's missionaries is a snap with web pages.

Tip: Find out if your missionaries have their own web page—you'd be surprised how many do—and ask for their web addresses. Instead of visiting the sites yourself, recruit some kids in your church to help you. This will generate enthusiasm for a church web site among the younger set.

The toolbox: Thanks to easy-to-use page-building software and page-storage facilities, it's simple and inexpensive for your congregation to build its own page. If your church already owns a computer and a modem, you can publish your web page free.

You'll need either a Macintosh or IBM-compatible machine, with 8Mb of random access memory (RAM) to run the software efficiently. You'll also need about 10Mb of free hard disk space. A color monitor is helpful but not essential. You can get by with a modem able to send and receive data at 14,400 bits per second. However, 28,800 bps modems are available and will drastically reduce long file transfer times.

Any of the popular operating systems will work, including Macintosh System 7.0 or better, Windows 3.1 and Windows 95. You'll need a software program called a "browser" to help construct and visit your page. These allow you to access the web and download valuable information. Some basic browsers are available free from public domain (Internet Explorer, AMSD Ariadna, ActiveX), but more advanced browsers (such as Netscape Navigator) must be purchased through shareware or directly from the software company. Web browsers are also available when using America Online, Prodigy or CompuServe—you download these programs from their library of files to your hard drive. If you're not going through an online service, you'll need to obtain an account from an internet service provider. The ISP may provide you with a good web browser when you sign up for their services.

Learning the language: Web pages are constructed using a computer editing code called HTML (hypertext markup language). HTML uses code to make certain words stand out from others and allows you to create links that enable readers to click on a word and automatically be switched to a different web site.

It may sound imposing, but it's not that difficult, especially with some of the new, mainstream software packages (ClarisWorks 4.0, for example) that contain HTML translators as built-in features or add-ons. Some HTML authoring software simplifies the process by using a graphical interface to guide you through the page-building process—GNNpress and HotMetal are two examples.

Page binders: Most online services don't charge members to occupy web page storage space. America Online offers the most room: 2Mb per individual, up to five individuals per account. That's a total of 10Mb, enough to create some impressive pages. CompuServe and Prodigy each offer 1Mb of free storage space. While the storage space may be generous, the time you spend uploading your page will be charged to your account. If you will be spending a considerable amount of time updating your web pages, shop for a high-volume discount with your online service.

Other necessities: In order to access your home page, members of your congregation will need the right equipment. Late-model computers usually come with enough RAM to operate web browsers efficiently. Your readers will also need modems—the faster the better. Modem prices range between $100 and $200, though you can find some for less. Modems are standard equipment with most new computers. Slower baud or bits-per-second rates mean long waiting periods when accessing your home page. Out of respect for readers who don't own fast modems, you may want to keep artwork to a minimum at first.

Donald M. Harting is freelance journalist in Liverpool, N.Y. This article was reprinted from Your Church *(Jan./Feb. issue).*

Visit *The Mennonite*'s web page at http://www2.southwind.net/~gcmc/tm.html

Letters

SUPPORTS PRISONERS FUND

Thank you for your hard work and energy that you put into creating *The Mennonite*. I enjoy seeing what God is doing around the world. May God bless you richly as you seek to follow him.

In your Feb. 11 issue I noticed that the "fund for prisoners is empty." I would like to contribute to sending *The Mennonite* to these prisoners. *Ryan Grove, Reading, Pa.*

JESUS HAD COMPASSION FOR ALL

In reference to the letters of brothers Abe Janzen and Arthur Simpson (Feb. 25 issue, page 16), my emotional responses ranged from consternation to confusion to sadness to "I need to respond."

Any objective reading of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) tells us of a Jesus who had concern and compassion for the well-being of everyone. Jesus demonstrated that caring both in teaching and healing. To separate Jesus' teaching (concern for heart, soul and mind) from healing (concern for the body—hunger, health, housing) is to be disobedient to and a denial of the life and person of Jesus the Christ.

The same is true, and must be true, of those who claim discipleship of our Savior and Lord. The continuing "wedging" of evangelism and service within the Christian community, from whatever source, is to spike another nail through the hands and feet of our crucified Christ.

Brother Janzen, relative to your statement "there are no Scriptures that make the church responsible for peace and justice in the world," I submit that a statement nearer the truth would be to change the ending to read thus:

"There are no Scriptures that relieve the church of responsibility for peace and justice in the world." Of all that Scripture, there is none better than Matthew 5,6,7 and 25. *Menno J. Ediger, Mission, B.C.*

WELFARE REFORM AND POVERTY

I appreciate the reflection on welfare reform (March 11 issue, page 12). As one who has experienced poverty and homelessness as a result of a mental illness, I have my own reflections.

It takes five to seven years for one who has experienced homelessness as a result of mental illness to rebuild oneself. Although those with mental illnesses are not necessarily affected by welfare reform the question arises, When will it end?

The big question to me, and this is where I feel the social gospel movement has failed, is, How does one invite the poor into the community? Poverty does not take away one's pride, but it does give one a sense of isolation from the rest of society. This is part of one's suffering.

One cannot easily reach out to the poor. While the conservatives are right that one can't just throw money at the problem, I think economics has to be part of it. What is the other part? The part missed in Matthew 25 is "a friend to the lonely." Jesus was astute in realizing that loneliness was a part of the suffering one experiences in poverty.

I think this is part of the direction future discussions should take on what role churches should take in light of welfare reform. One idea is communal meals. This is difficult to establish, but if we are to invite the poor into our midst it must be done with a certain degree of equality. This is part of the meaning of foot washing.

The poor are often invisible. They may dress like anybody else. This makes it easy to deny that they exist. You may not know someone is poor, but that person knows it. That person may or may not choose to tell you.

The question for American churches is much bigger than welfare reform. How does one reach out to those in poverty? It is sad that this question isn't raised before welfare reform. It is a question relevant to all times. But one shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the church is a community. What does that mean in terms of economic diversity or homogeneity? *Phil Fuller, St. Paul, Minn.*

PETER'S ROLE AS WITNESS

This is the Easter season, so once more on Luke 5 and John 21 (see Letters, March 11 issue, page 10). If these are two accounts of one event, Peter's role as witness to the resurrection of Jesus is a shambles. Put it in the form of an interview:

Question: You say Jesus is alive?

Peter: Yes, I saw him with my own eyes.

Question: Was this after he was crucified?

Peter: Yes, the week after, at the lake.

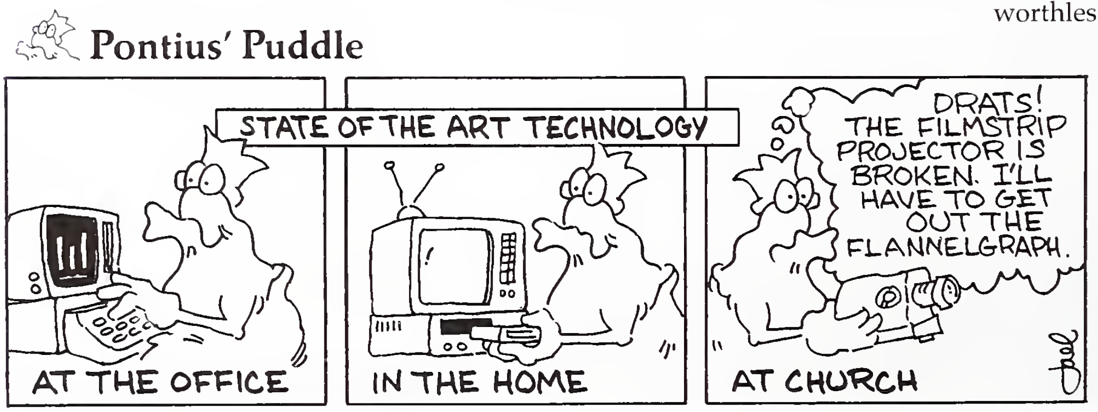
Question: On the lake? Didn't you see him there when you first met him, three years before?

Peter: Well … maybe it was three years before, when I first met him. I'm not sure.

If the apostles cannot tell the difference between seeing a close friend during his lifetime and seeing him alive after he died, their credibility is worthless.

Darrell says his approach is open to the "dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in our lives." Why should we trust some Spirit who cannot even keep two eyewitness accounts straight? *Monty Ledford, Aberdeen, Idaho*

Pontius' Puddle


STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY
AT THE OFFICE
IN THE HOME
DRATS! THE FILMSTRIP PROJECTOR IS BROKEN. I'LL HAVE TO GET OUT THE FLANNELGRAPH.
AT CHURCH
Joel

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity.*

Healthy boundaries

What defines Mennonite identity today?

Lois Barrett

The Jerusalem conference (see Acts 15), as it is known, dealt with boundary issues. Judaism had taken in proselytes but without adjusting the boundaries, particularly the boundary of circumcision for men. Now the evangelistic work of the new Christian church was bringing in men who did not want to be circumcised, and some of the missionaries had been dropping circumcision as a requirement. The Jerusalem conference decided that circumcision did not make a difference. But they did not drop all boundaries: fornication (sexual misconduct of all kinds) and certain food laws (not eating blood or meat from animals that had been strangled, as well as not eating food sacrificed to idols).

But that wasn't the end of the discussion on eating food sacrificed to idols. This was a real problem in the Gentile world, because virtually all meat you could buy in the public market had first been offered as a sacrifice in a pagan temple. What were Christians to do? If you were urban and did not live near a kosher butcher, your choices were to eat meat sacrificed to idols or to be vegetarian.

The apostle Paul took a different position. In Romans 14, Colossians 2:16 and 1 Corinthians 8, Paul says that since idols are not real, food offered to idols is unclean only if one thinks it is unclean. But for the sake of not offending the "weak" brother or sister, one should not eat meat in front of people for whom it would be offensive. However, in 1 Corinthians 10:14-33 it is clear Paul thought one should not participate in pagan ritual meals in the temple. That was different.

But this issue was not settled within the early church. In Revelation 2 (the Spirit's words to the churches in Pergamum and Thyatira), these congregations are criticized because they eat food sacrificed to idols. In the first century, churches showed considerable diversity on this issue. Different congregations had different boundaries.

Why do we need boundaries? Why not be as inclusive as possible and say, "Everybody welcome"? Why say no?

Healthy skin: Healthy churches have healthy boundaries, just as healthy people have healthy skin. Boundaries are related to identity, the "we" that endures through shifting circumstances. It includes values, means and strategies, vision, goals, flavor or style. To have boundaries assumes that the church is different from the world in some ways.

A couple had begun attending our congregation. They were perennial Mennonite church hoppers, never satisfied anywhere. She kept pushing the church on boundary issues. One day we got to the underlying issue. She said, "This would be a good church if you just didn't talk so much about Jesus." That was a boundary we were not willing to change.

Boundaries are needed for healthy identity. If the church doesn't know who it is, if it doesn't know who belongs here—or doesn't agree on who should belong—the invitations, the reaching out to others will be half-hearted and not convincing. When we know who we are, what we are here for, we are then able to attract and integrate (assimilate) people into a community.

> ***When we know who we are, what we are here for, we are then able to attract and integrate (assimilate) people into a community.***

But not all boundaries are helpful or biblical. What are the right boundaries for us in this time? How do we choose the right boundaries? Are the church's membership boundaries supposed to be the same in every time and place?

To my knowledge, no church in North America is saying much about food sacrificed to idols, because our situation has changed.

The issue here is nonconformity to the world. If the church is God's holy nation, it will be different from the dominant culture. Others will recognize there is something different about us. In order to make a difference, in order to make a powerful witness, the church does not have to do everything differently from the dominant culture. It needs to dissent in a few key areas. In those key areas you have relatively clear boundaries; in other areas there may be more room for variation.

What are those areas of dissent for Mennonites in North America today? What defines Mennonite identity?

Ethnic or racial identity no longer works. The German language isn't a boundary. Dress codes no longer define the boundaries.

One boundary is the centrality of Christ for both salvation and discipleship. Another has been acceptance of the need to give and receive counsel in the congregation, which has implications for the kind of community we are. And for most Mennonites in the past 500 years, nonparticipation in the military has been an identity issue, a place of dissent from the dominant culture, an issue of public witness.

We also have diversity among Mennonite churches on boundary issues. In the past 25 years, many churches have changed on the issue of accepting members who have been divorced and remarried.

The hot areas now are whether to accept members whose homosexual behavior doesn't measure up the 1986 and 1987 statements of our two denominations (premarital sex and adultery don't seem to be dealt with in the same way), whether to accept members whose behavior in working in and for the military doesn't measure up to the peace statements of our two denominations, and how much variation to allow from congregation to congregation. (The Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church have dealt with this in different styles.)

Every conference has congregations full of sinners, repentant and otherwise, public and private. But which of these sins are related to a boundary or identity issue? How do we decide?

What does faithfulness to the gospel mean for the mission of the church in our setting? There are three elements:

BIBLE *continued*

1. Faithfulness to the gospel: Boundary issues must have clear basis in Scripture and especially in relation to Jesus. As Mennonites we "seek to understand and interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ as we are led by the Holy Spirit in the church." But not everything connected with faithfulness to the gospel is a boundary issue. We don't expect people to have it all together the day they are baptized. Faithfulness is a necessary but not sufficient element in our discernment.

2. Our setting: What is going on in society around the church will make a difference on the boundary issues. It is tempting simply to go along with the popular issues of the dominant culture, to try to blend in, not to look different. But it is the church's calling to be salt, to be light, to be different as a witness to Jesus Christ. Being a Christian is different from being a good citizen or a nice person. What are the areas in which the church is most called to be a contrast society? What is the setting of the local congregation? What is the setting of the denomination? To what extent should all churches of a denomination have the same boundaries?

> ***Being a Christian is different from being a good citizen or a nice person.***

3. The mission of the church: Whatever boundaries the church sets need to help the church fulfill its mission: to proclaim and to be a sign of the reign of God. This does not mean soft-pedaling the areas of contrast. It is in being a contrast society on crucial issues that is part of the public witness of the church. Missional churches have a clear identity. Boundary issues are judged by whether they proclaim the reign of God and by whether they help the church be a sign of the reign of God.

The Jerusalem conference made its decisions about boundaries in the light of the mission of the church. That is also the task of the church in our time.

Lois Barrett is executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. This is Part II of an abridged version of a presentation she gave at the Members in the Military Consultation last November.

Fiscal health

● ● ▼

J.B. Miller is vice president for financial services for Mennonite Mutual Aid and manager of Mennonite Foundation.

Rules that are truly golden

Be hopeful, thankful, intelligent and loving are four rules for Christians.

J.B. Miller

When I received the book *Ten Golden Rules for Financial Success* by Gary Moore, I thought it might be one of those books that claims all good Christians are rich financially, or that if I read the book I would be guaranteed financial success. But what caught my eye was the subtitle: "Riches I've Gathered From Legendary Mutual Fund Manager Sir John M. Templeton."

I have great respect for Templeton, a man who came from modest circumstances to graduate from Yale and become a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. Although now retired, he is still one of the most respected investment managers in the world. While those qualities are fine, the thing that sets him apart is the fact that Templeton is an articulate Christian who speaks of his spiritual commitment in the context of wealth and investments.

Several of the "golden rules" in the book were particularly thought-provoking.

• To achieve success, be neither an optimist nor a pessimist but a realist with a hopeful nature. I like that. Too often I have found that Christians love to be pessimists, particularly when it comes to the economy or finances. Why do people love to read books that promote the financial end of the world? I remember reading a book by David Wilkerson that predicted all sorts of cataclysmic events. He seemed certain this was a prophecy from God. Nothing close to what he prophesied happened, but that didn't keep other Christians from writing books in the same vein, and people bought them by the thousands. After reading several of these books and listening to television ministers making similar predictions (and they are still doing it), I quit reading and listening to them and decided they were false prophets. I have found less anxiety by following this golden rule and developing a hopeful nature.

• Count your blessings to enrich yourself and your neighbors, first spiritually, then perhaps financially. We need to count the tremendous blessings we enjoy, and while these blessings enrich us, it does not mean we will be rich financially. I wonder how often we think poverty is the fault of the person, not recognizing that there are systemic problems in our society that often keep people from rising above it.

• If you want to prosper, investigate before you invest. As we strive to be good stewards of God's resources, it's important we understand how we invest our money. If we are unfamiliar with a type of investment, we need to avoid it or wait until we have a good understanding of it. This includes stocks, bonds, mutual funds and any type of investment that has risk associated with it. Few of us would buy real estate we hadn't seen or known anything about. Know what you're buying and the risks associated with the investment.

• Measure success with a single word—love. We tend to measure success in monetary ways. What is my net worth? What is my professional title? What school did I go to or what kind of car do I drive? As Christians, those measures of success aren't worth a hill of beans. The things that matter and have eternal worth are how I deal with the world around me and how my life and actions exemplify the life of Christ.

AMBS • window

Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

Profile

J. Nelson Kraybill,

New AMBS president

J. Nelson Kraybill was inaugurated as president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on March 16, 1997.

Ever since he was a young boy, Nelson Kraybill has sensed that his life work would be in the church. That seed was nurtured in his family and congregation as he grew up on a farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. As he attended Mennonite schools in Pennsylvania and then Goshen College, encouragement from others reinforced that early sense of call.

After college, Nelson and Ellen Graber Kraybill were married and they moved to Ellen's home area of Puerto Rico. There Nelson taught at Summit Hills Mennonite Academy and began seminary studies.

Nelson completed his Master of Divinity degree at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1983. During this time he was a pastoral intern at Doylestown Mennonite Church and discovered how much he enjoyed the role of pastor. He then served the Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Church in Vermont for four and a half years, also serving as chairman of the New England Fellowship of Mennonite Churches. He was ordained in the Franconia Mennonite Conference in 1985.

Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., came next as Nelson pursued further studies in New Testament. He earned his doctor of philosophy degree in 1992 and his dissertation in revised form, *Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse*, was published in 1996.

Most recently, Nelson has served with Mennonite Board of Missions as program director of the London Mennonite Centre. His work in London in these last six years often involved explaining the Anabaptist heritage to people on the cutting edge of the church, people looking for resources to help them in their every-day ministry. This, he says, helped him put down deeper roots in the Mennonite heritage—not just as a tradition from the past, but as a resource for the church today.

Another asset Nelson brings to his role is his recent work in conflict resolution in Great Britain. He and a colleague founded Bridge Builders Mediation Service which worked to translate Anabaptist values into a needed resource for congregations there.

In addition, spiritual disciplines have helped to shape Nelson for his new role. Twice-a-day times of prayer and scripture reading with others at the London Mennonite Centre established for him a rhythm of prayer as part of daily work life.

As he becomes president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Nelson sees himself continuing in the role of pastor and missionary. "The seminary's reason for being," he says, "is to prepare leaders to deal with the most pressing agenda of congregations, conferences and church organizations. We are preparing leaders who stand within the Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage of church renewal while engaging in respectful dialogue with other Christian groups."

- Mary E. Klassen

Inside

New president's hopes for AMBS

Photo highlights of Nelson Kraybill's inauguration

AMBS: The Unfolding Story

President's Window

Andrea, Laura, Ellen and Nelson Kraybill join in singing the opening hym of the inauguration service, Sunday, March 16, 1997, at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

New president's hopes for AMBS

In his response to the charge, Nelson Kraybill noted several hopes for AMBS:

- *that AMBS will hold together love for God and the Scriptures and high academic standards;*
- *that AMBS will continue to grow in expressions of prayer, worship and spiritual disciplines;*
- *that at AMBS God will mold leaders of conviction and courage who do not hesitate to lead, to teach, and preach and administer...;*
- *that AMBS will "rediscover for our generation the joy of evangelism and mission"; and*
- *that AMBS will strengthen ties with the church. "We are not just a good academic institution. We are a mission arm of the church. We look for your prayers and support."*

"Get your feet wet," inaugural speaker says

The inaugural address was presented by Dorothy Nickel Friesen, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, and former assistant dean of AMBS. Reflecting on scripture texts about the river of life from Ezekiel and Revelation, she shared what the writers of these two texts might say at the inauguration of a seminary president.

"Try suggesting that the leaders and maybe that new president dip their feet into some waters coming from the Holy One," Nickel Friesen suggested Ezekiel would say. "Walk around in the puddles of God's love. Wade in streams of mercy, compassion and hope. Your faith will be nourished by these deep streams... It will be wonderful to see new life, new hope, new dreams all nourished by this never-ending stream."

John of Patmos, according to Nickel Friesen, would say, "Presidents and others must lead with a sense of mission and challenge and with their feet in the river of life. That water comes from the life of the worshipping community... That water comes from a life of prayer and singing, from service and witness, from loneliness and suffering. That water will nourish us forever. It will nourish the world."

Greetings to Nelson were brought by Willard M. Swartley, AMBS dean; Tonya Ramer, AMBS student; Miriam F. Book, representing the Mennonite Church; Darrell Fast, representing the General Conference Mennonite Church; Cheryl A. Tupper, representing the Association of Theological Schools; and Alastair McKay, representing the London Mennonite Centre.

Nelson Kraybill takes the position of AMBS president which Marlin E. Miller held until his death in November 1994. Gerald Gerbrandt, now president-elect of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, served as interim president from July 1, 1995, to June 30, 1996. Two faculty members also served as acting president for brief periods: Gayle Gerber Koontz immediately following Miller's death, and most recently Willard M. Swartley.

AMBS: The unfolding story

The story of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary combines several threads of Mennonite theological education during the past fifty years.

As World War 2 drew to a close, General Conference Mennonites revisited their dreams of sponsoring a graduate seminary program—dreams which culminated in the 1945 opening of Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS) in Chicago. Meanwhile neighboring (Old) Mennonites in Indiana had been expanding the Bible school curriculum of their denomination's Goshen College until it, too, became a recognized seminary in 1946.

Some people within each denomination dreamed of forming an Associated Mennonite academic community. Jointly-sponsored summer terms provided one opportunity to test the idea, and by 1958, as confidence had grown, the two schools established an on-going relationship as AMBS. MBS opened a new campus in Elkhart, Indiana, where GCBS joined it eleven years later.

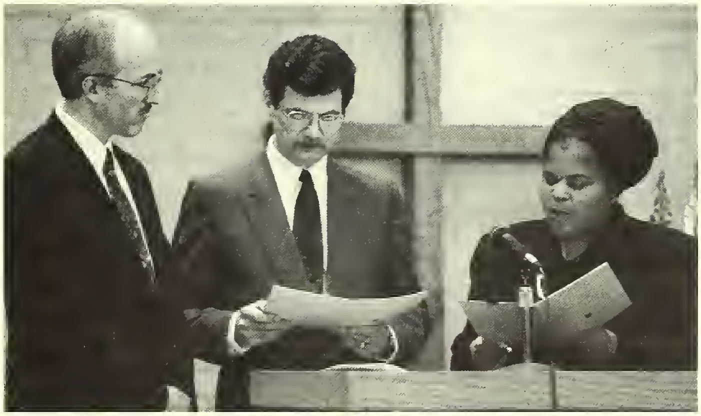
Since then cooperation between the schools has expanded steadily. By 1964 the institutions appointed a common dean, and in 1990 Marlin E. Miller became the first jointly-appointed president. And in 1993, AMBS incorporated as a single seminary. Meanwhile the student body has grown to include members of other traditions, and to represent the international nature of the church. Likewise, the curriculum has expanded and deepened, strengthening elements such as spiritual formation and congregational-based pastoral education.

A fiftieth anniversary celebration and the inauguration of a new president point to both continuity and change for AMBS—themes upon which the school's leaders have often reflected. "I recognize my deep indebtedness to all who have gone before me in the life of the church and in the life of the seminary," Erland Waltner noted during his own inauguration as MBS president in 1958. "Here, too, as Jesus said, the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps. Others have labored and you have entered into their labors.' We are but links in a chain which is being forged in a Hand that is not our own."

Twenty-five years later, looking to the future, Marlin Miller mused that "the future of [AMBS] depends upon sensitivity to God's purposes in the coming year. God likely has more surprises in store for the churches and the seminaries . . . than we currently perceive. Let us look toward the future in the trust that God will indeed both sustain and surprise us."

Steve Nolt, AMBS Master of Arts in Theological Studies, with concentration in church history, 1994

Nelson Kraybill was wrapped in prayers, literally and symbolically, as he received the gift of a prayer shawl during the service. It was woven of strips of linen on which people had written prayers for him and future presidents of AMBS.



Nelson Kraybill listens as the charge is read to him by Victor Kliewer, Leamington, Ont., representing Mennonite Biblical Seminary; and Wilma Ann Bailey, Grantham, Pa., representing Mennonite Board of Education.

Erland Waltner, first president to serve on the AMBS campus in Elkhart, Ind., greets new AMBS president Nelson Kraybill.

Joe Lapp, president of Eastern Mennonite University, and George R. Brunk, III, vice president and dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, talk with Nelson and Ellen Kraybill during the reception.

President's Window

There was a holy conspiracy around AMBS in weeks prior to inauguration: students, faculty, staff, conference leaders, board members, visiting pastors and others all wrote prayers of blessing for the new president onto strips of linen taken from tablecloths that had actually been used at household meals. While I was absorbed in the first round of learning responsibilities of my office, the inauguration committee was discretely distributing and collecting these swaddling prayers.

Artists Barbara Peterson and Gwen Miller then wove the strips into a seven-foot-long white prayer shawl with gold accent. Linen that once covered tables of fellowship, food and communion now would cover the new president as a symbol of community blessing and support. With hundreds of AMBS friends gathered around on inauguration Sunday, a member of the planning committee placed a stunning new piece of fabric over my shoulders. Literally and figuratively, I was wrapped in prayers of the church I am called to serve as AMBS president.

A book called *Prayers for the President* was placed into my hands—127 pages of the blessings now blended into the shawl. Since inauguration I have begun to read these prayers, one-a-day as part of my waiting on God: "Jesus Christ, friend and brother, you have called. Uphold, bless, strengthen, guide, protect, give joy - for the sake of your reign here. Amen . . . O God, please give this president wisdom for the task, joy in this ministry, and a keen sense of humor for hard times." Perhaps the most intriguing blessing was simply, "Listen for the sound of wings!" Come, Holy Spirit.

One artist who helped create the shawl wrote, "This was truly a collaborative effort." She went on to note that we are all co-creators with God. What a privilege! Piece-by-piece we offer our prayers, our hopes, our creativity, our very lives to be woven into a fabric of God's love and mercy that encircles the globe. What a joy to be at a campus where people—pieces of that fabric—are prepared for leadership and service in the church! What great hope to be part of a worshipping people who surround each other with Holy Spirit grace and love. Listen - do you hear the sound of wings?

- *J. Nelson Kraybill*

The Healing Ministry of the Church
June 13-14, 1997

Weekend conference at AMBS

Presenters:
Willard M. Swartley
The Bible and Healing
Tilda Norberg
Pastoral Care and Healing
Marcus G. Smucker
Spirituality and Healing

For additional information contact the AMBS continuing education office, 219 296-6207 or bsawatzky@ambs.edu.

AMBS Panorama

New faculty appointments

Karl Koop will join the AMBS faculty in fall as assistant professor of theology and Anabaptist-Mennonite studies. Currently Karl is serving with Mennonite Central Committee in Berlin, Germany. He received a Master of Divinity degree from AMBS in 1990 and is a Ph.D. candidate at the Toronto School of Theology.

Marlene Kropf, currently an adjunct faculty member, has been appointed to the half-time position of assistant professor in spiritual formation and worship. She holds an M.Div. degree from AMBS and is a D.Min. candidate at the Graduate Theological Foundation.

Alumni awards

Three alumni are winners in the 1996 John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest. In Class I for seminary and graduate students, first, second and third places were claimed by AMBS alumni:
Shuji Moriichi, "The Beginning of the Mennonite Church Mission in Japan 1949-1959."
Paulus Widjaja, "The Sixteenth Century Anabaptist view of the State."
Natasha Sawatsky, "The Berlin Problem: MCC Involvement in Post World War II Germany."

Enrollment jumps again

Enrollment at AMBS took another jump up for second semester. The total number of students studying at AMBS now is 203, compared to 194 first semester and 158 second semester of 1995-96.

Interterm 1998

Tentative course offerings for Interterm 1998 include Corinthian Correspondence with Jacob Elias, Congregational Spirituality with Marlene Kropf, Hymnology with Mary Oyer, Theology and Culture with Duane Friesen, a mission course to be arranged, and a church history course to be arranged. Interterm courses are scheduled for January 5-23, 1998.

Pastors' Week 1998

"Invitation and Belonging: Congregational Rituals and Rhythms" is the theme chosen for Pastors' Week, January 26-29, 1998.

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

Editor and designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos by J. Tyler Klassen

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Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

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News

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Hebron CPTer arrested at end of 700-hour fast

Hebron, West Bank (CPT)—Cliff Kindy, North Manchester, Ind., a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Hebron, was arrested March 28 as he helped clear the rubble of a demolished home in preparation for rebuilding. A rabbi and two Palestinians were arrested along with Kindy.

At the same time clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces were taking place in downtown Hebron on Good Friday morning, just to the east of Hebron more than 30 Palestinians, Israelis and internationals including CPTers were throwing rocks in a different way.

The Zalloum family's home was demolished by Israeli soldiers just over a year ago without a military demolition order and after then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres had ordered all demolitions to halt. The site has been in the Zalloum family for generations.

CPTer Anne Montgomery, Brooklyn, N.Y., says, "The rebuilding action was both an Easter symbol of hope amid the [Israeli] occupation's destruction and a concrete challenge to Israeli home-demolition policy."

> **"The rebuilding action was an Easter symbol of hope amid the [Israeli] occupation's destruction."**
> ***Anne Montgomery***

Montgomery and three other CPTers protested the demolition a year ago and were dragged off the roof by soldiers and arrested at that time.

Rebuilders gathered early Good Friday morning at the destroyed Zalloum home and soon attracted Israeli police, who warned them that because of high settler tension over planned widespread Palestinian nonviolent resistance around Land Day on Sunday, March 30 (a Palestinian observance of Israeli confiscation of their land), if any activity took place at the Zalloum home, the area would be declared a "closed military zone."

Soldiers refused to allow a large truck and bulldozer brought to help with rubble removal to reach the site, even though they had not yet declared the area closed. Meanwhile, the rebuilders began breaking up rocks with sledgehammers and removing the rubble by hand.

CPTer Mark Frey, North Newton, Kan., says, "The amount of rock was overwhelming, but it really felt like each piece we cleared was a chip against the wall of occupation."

"We were 'throwing rocks' as a constructive form of resistance side by side with young Palestinian men whom we'd seen only a few days before throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers," says CPTer Sara Reschly, Tucson, Ariz.

Work continued for an hour until soldiers arrived with paperwork declaring the area a closed military zone and told people to leave or be arrested. While many left, Kindy, Montgomery and Arik Asherman of Rabbis for Human Rights, along with two young Palestinian men, continued working.

Approximately 10 soldiers encircled the house while the police captain explained to Asherman that arrest was imminent. Kindy, working in a narrow crawl-space under the broken cement roof, called jokingly to the soldiers, "Hey, you guys with helmets, come on down here; there's a lot of rubble down here."

The soldiers laughed, and Kindy continued to carry rock through the semicircle of soldiers until he was taken by the arm and arrested along with Asherman when they said they would return to work.

The two Palestinians were hit, pushed and had their hair pulled by the soldiers.

While Asherman was later released, the two Palestinians were imprisoned and charged with resisting arrest, violating a closed military zone order and attacking a police officer. Kindy was also imprisoned for violating the order and was told he would be deported to the United States after 48 hours.

Kindy contacted the rest of the CPT Hebron group early Sunday afternoon, March 30. After 48 hours, the police

Inside the news

Volunteers evicted by Austin officials / p. 15

New president 'wrapped in prayer' / p. 17

Rebel troops near Mennonite areas in Zaire / p. 18

Salina (Kan.) Mennonite Church celebrated its 15th anniversary April 12-13.

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Earlier this year, Morristown, Tenn., fifth-grader John Dobbins beat out 70 other entrants to win first prize in the Manley Elementary science fair with "What Makes My Feet Stink." Dobbins filled a jar with gelatin, added bacteria that he swabbed from his feet and sat back to watch it grow. (*Wichita Eagle*)

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An anonymous car salesman who grew up Mennonite and now attends a Pentecostal church in Steinbach, Man., recently raised $3,000 Cdn. to buy 4,000 pornographic videos—which he then burned. After the man heard that video store owner Ed Schroeder was willing to purge his supply of sex films, he went around asking other Christian men to donate toward their purchase price. He had it in about a week. So that no one could accuse him of keeping some of the videos for himself, he took three men with him, including his pastor, to pick up the videos and take them directly to the Bethesda Hospital incinerator. Schroeder said in a January article in the Winnipeg *Free Press* that he was happy to see the videos go and would replace them with Christian videos such as *The Ten Commandments* and *The Life of Jesus Christ*. (*Aiden Schlichting Enns*)

First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kan., will celebrate its 75th anniversary Oct. 11-12. Call (316) 662-9385.

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Bread for the World's 1997 National Gathering will take place June 21-24 on the campus of American University in Washington. It includes worship, skills and issues workshops and a Lobby Day. Keynote speaker is Walter Brueggeman, world renowned Old Testament scholar at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. Call Tia Butler at BFW's national office, (301) 608-2400, ext. 207.

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A gathering is being planned for Aug. 7-9, 1998, at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont., for Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Board (now Eastern Mennonite Missions) alumni who served in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. For more information, contact Miriam Frey, 70 Northside Drive, St. Jacobs, ON N0B 2N0, (519) 664-2291; or Joy Dorsch, 117 Spadina Road E., Kitchener, ON N2M 3X5, (519) 570-4447.

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Mennonite Disaster Service will turn 50 in 2000. The MDS board, meeting Feb. 7-8 in Columbus, Miss., approved a proposal that Lowell Detweiler, current MDS executive coordinator, write a book of MDS stories and history, as well as coordinate planning for a celebration in Kansas in summer 2000. The idea to create MDS originated in a conversation at a Sunday school picnic in Hesston, Kan., in 1950. Detweiler will leave his position in 1998, although he will remain on staff to work on anniversary activities. The board appointed an executive coordinator search committee, which hopes to name a new coordinator by Jan. 1, 1998, and approved a 1997 budget of $450,000 U.S./$600,000 Cdn. (*Pearl Sensenig*)

Fasting at the front door

Daryl Byler (MCC)

Rich Meyer, right, Millersburg, Ind., a member of Christian Peacemaker Corps, spent March 1-30 in Lafayette Park, across from the White House. Most days he was in the park from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., although he camped out there from Good Friday, March 28, through Easter sunrise.

He observed a liquid-only fast in solidarity with Christian Peacemaker Teams Hebron members who were fasting for 700 hours to represent the 700 Palestinian homes slated for demolition by Israeli authorities.

Meyer spoke with visitors in Lafayette Park, many of them schoolchildren. Here he shows a photo of a demolished Palestinian home to help explain his fast.

One afternoon he took time off to go to the B'nai B'rith museum—a collection of Judaica from post-war Europe. "It made me acutely aware of the contributions Judaism has made and continues to make to my faith and to my world," says Meyer, "and of the cost of perseverance to Jews through the centuries and around the globe." *(CPT)*

were obligated to release him or take him before a judge. They chose the latter.

On Easter Sunday morning, Kindy appeared before a judge, who arrested him for an additional 48 hours and had him transferred to Ashkelon prison in Gaza.

Monday evening, March 31, the authorities took Kindy to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv and placed him on a flight to North America around 2 a.m. Tuesday, April 1.

The rebuilding project, initiated by CPT Hebron, came at the end of the five-person team's 700-hour (29-day) Fast for Rebuilding, which began March 1 and ended Easter morning, March 30. The fast highlighted the 700 (at least) West Bank homes vulnerable to demolition, protested the Israeli policy of demolishing Palestinian homes and called for rebuilding demolished homes.

On Easter Sunday, CPTers Frey, Montgomery, Reschly and Dianne Roe, Corning, N.Y., ended their fast at St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem.

Naim Ateek, a Palestinian pastor and theologian, led a special worship service for the team and their friends and supporters. The service included prayer, reflection and a call to continue the struggle against the destruction of Palestinian homes.

Roe says, "For me the fast symbolized an emptying out of barriers in order to begin the process of rebuilding—not only a rebuilding of homes, but of Palestinian-Israeli relationships based on equality and justice."

The four CPTers ended their fast with dates, raisins and dried fruit, symbolic of the fruit and hope coming from the land and people of Palestine. Before this, however, they offered a prayer for Kindy, who was breaking fast in a Hebron jail cell.

Volunteers evicted by Austin officials

Austin, Texas (GCMC/MC)—Two Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) workers and two homeless families were evicted from the premises of Shalom House April 1 by members of the Austin city police and fire departments.

MVS is a joint program of the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Home Ministries and the Mennonite Church's Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

Foundation for the Homeless, the sponsoring agency for Shalom House, a shelter for homeless families with infants or pregnant women, holds a lease agreement for the 30,000-square-foot former office building at 7000 Cameron Road on Austin's east side. The agreement is not due to expire for another six months.

The foundation had signed the lease with an option for Austin Mennonite Church to buy the property but was told that a computer company had outbid them for the building by a margin so great there was no way for the church to compete.

The reasons behind the eviction are complex. When the building was initially built, proper building permits were never obtained. Therefore, it always had been technically illegal to occupy the premises.

According to Austin Mennonite pastor Kathy Goering Reid, shortly after the computer company made the offer to buy the property, several city offices began getting anonymous calls of complaint about the MVS unit and Shalom House occupying the building.

"We know the complaints didn't come from the neighborhood," she says. "We don't know for sure who made them."

When the eviction notice was

28 years of loving care

Tim Eisenbeis

Recife, Brazil (MCC)—Dona Zefa has prepared at least 122,640 dinners for Mennonite Central Committee workers and staff at the MCC Brazil office and guest house here during the past 28 years. That's not counting the many breakfasts, suppers, snacks and picnics for which she has boiled, fried, stewed, toasted, roasted and baked. Members of the MCC team recently gathered to honor Dona Zefa, who is hanging up her apron. She has had eight different "bosses" (country representatives), almost all of whom knew little or no Portuguese at first, and has learned to adjust her menus from Brazilian dishes to German-Russian fare to Indian food to vegetarian, depending on the team composition. Dona Zefa has been a hub for MCC Brazil, says Bert Enns, current co-director. "She is the only one," he says, "who could write a complete history of the 28 years MCC has worked in northeast Brazil."

After Canada's Assembly of First Nations complained about a monument in Ottawa, the National Capital Commission agreed to remove the "offensive" part within a year. The monument honors Champlain, considered the founder of Quebec, and includes a life-sized bronze sculpture of a Native scout crouching at the bottom of the memorial dressed only in a loincloth, sash and feathers. In June 1996, First Nations Grand Chief Ovide Mercredi held a ceremony at the monument where he covered the figure with a blanket. Another statue controversy was laid to rest in Winnipeg in 1996, when a new statue of Metis Louis Riel was unveiled there. The previous statue depicted a naked Riel. (*Indian Life*)

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Keith and Lori Miller can empathize more than most foreigners with Rwandan and Zairian refugees now in Zaire. The Millers and their two young sons lost all their belongings in Bunia, eastern Zaire, to looting. The Millers, from Colorado Springs, Colo., serve with Eastern Mennonite Missions and Wycliffe Bible Translators. They have only the clothes and the few possessions they took with them when they left Bunia last August to participate in an orientation course for Wycliffe workers assigned to eastern Africa. In December 1996 the Millers learned that all missionaries had been evacuated from Bunia and that Zairian soldiers had looted the town before they fled ahead of rebel forces. "Our office and the storage depot [where we] had all our belongings stored were completely looted," says Keith. "Our family has moved almost constantly for the last 15 months and we need time to become settled and stable again." The Millers moved to Bunia in June 1996. One week after they arrived, two men armed with a large knife and a screwdriver broke into the house where they were living, stole money, hurt another couple in the house and threatened Keith. The Millers have transferred to Nairobi for one year, where they will continue working with Wycliffe. (*Carol L. Wert*)

First Mennonite Church of Paso Robles, Calif., will celebrate its centennial Oct. 3-5. Call (805) 238-2445.

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Program of Conscientization for North America is aimed at world citizens interested in gaining a perspective on their lives as First World Christians in relation to Latin America and the Two-Thirds World. The 1997 Latin American Workshop will be held in Bogota, Colombia, July 12-Aug. 11. Contact Judy Sprunger, 5419 SE 41st, Portland, OR 97202; (503) 777-0630; fax (503) 775-3264; e-mail sprunger@pps.k12.or.us.

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Five social work students at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., recently prepared, carried out and analyzed a study of the foster-care program administered by Youthville, a United Methodist-run child welfare agency in Newton, Kan. The students' report based on their research helped Youthville obtain a $15 million annual contract to manage the foster-care program for Harvey County, Sedgwick County (location of the state's largest city, Wichita) and all of western Kansas. (*June Krehbiel*)

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The Italian Catholic bishops have asked Protestants for forgiveness for the "suffering and injury" inflicted on them by the Catholic majority throughout the centuries. The apology came from the Archbishop of Perugia during a mid-February service at one of Italy's biggest Waldensian churches, on the 149th anniversary of the day King Charles Albert of Savoy issued a decree extending political and civil rights to Waldensians. Waldensians trace their roots to the 12th-century lay preacher Peter Valdes, who ignored a ban by the bishops and began preaching the gospel. His followers were persecuted by bishops and popes. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

served, MVSer Jenni Holsinger was at the Cameron Road building during a busy work day.

"The fire inspector came with two plainclothes police officers and told us that we were living there illegally and we had to get out," she says.

For the congregation, the MVS unit and Shalom House, the next steps differ. The congregation, which was hoping to make its new worship space in the building, will continue renting space from a nearby Seventh-Day Adventist church. MVSers Holsinger and Melani Guengerich are living with a family from the congregation until a house can be rented for them. The two families who lived in Shalom House have been temporarily moved into other programs.

Christy Risser

Bumpy beginning: *Jenni Holsinger, top, and Melani Guengerich are the first Austin, Texas, MVSers.*

Both Guengerich and Holsinger are assigned to work with Foundation for the Homeless, Guengerich as the coordinator of an after-school program and Holsinger as house manager for Shalom House. Now Holsinger's position technically no longer exists, but she is working with the foundation to determine her next steps.

Guengerich, of Harrisonburg, Va., and Holsinger, of Edmonds, Wash., arrived in Austin in late January as the first members of an MVS unit sponsored by Austin Mennonite Church.

The 38-member Austin Mennonite congregation worked hard to make a section of the building at 7000 Cameron Road livable for the two volunteers. Gangs had broken into the building numerous times, spraying graffiti and smashing windows, "essentially trashing the place," says Goering Reid.

"Saul [Murcia, MBM MVS coordinator] really helped us," she says. "By the time [the volunteers] arrived, he had told them how bad the building was for so long, they were impressed by the great condition it was in when they came— far better than having them come and be devastated."

For their first three weeks in Austin, Guengerich and Holsinger lived with members of the church. Despite the difficult start, the new MVSers were optimistic.

"I really like being able to be a part of a totally brand new unit," says Guengerich. "It's kind of an adventure and I really believe I'll look back on this experience as good."

Even with the further complications, Holsinger and Guengerich are trying hard to find the bright side of things.

"In some ways, I'm actually happy about [the eviction]," says Guengerich. "It will give us the chance to become our own unit finally. This will make us independent of the work place. We can go 'home' instead of just staying with work all of the time like at the Cameron Road building."

Goering Reid remains hopeful that things will work out in the end.

"We're going to deal with it," she says. "We're anticipating having one or two more MVSers by this summer. I look at it this way, we have the very first 'mobile' MVS unit in [recent] history.

" I feel bad that it's kind of hard on them, but I wouldn't trade Melani and Jenni for anybody in the world. Sometimes they seem to be the strongest ones of all of us."

Although the opening of the new unit is not going entirely as planned, Goering Reid says Austin Mennonite is a faithful congregation that will continue to follow a vision they have taken as their own.

Recently, Austin Metropolitan Ministries named Austin Mennonite Church one of 12 churches honored for "outstanding religious leadership in service to the community." Goering Reid says awards like this typically do not go to congregations as small as Austin Mennonite.

"I tell them we're small, and they think 200," she says. "They just have no idea that we're talking about fewer than 50 people here, but that's the amazing thing about Austin Mennonite. We are trying to answer questions vital to our existence, like, Can we be the kind of church that lives out what Jesus calls us to do? That's our vision. And we're going to keep doing the best we can, no matter what obstacles present themselves before us." *Christy Risser*

New president 'wrapped in prayers'

J. Tyler Klassen

Prayer shawl: *Emcee Tim Schrag (left), Kraybill, Yoder*

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—J. Nelson Kraybill was wrapped in prayers—literally and symbolically—as he was inaugurated president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on March 16 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

During the service of inauguration, Kraybill was given a prayer shawl woven from strips of linen on which people had written prayers. The gift was created for Kraybill but will pass to future presidents of AMBS.

As she presented the gift, June Alliman Yoder, AMBS associate professor of communication and preaching, said, "The wearer of the shawl wears the many heartfelt prayers that were written and woven into it. May you, Nelson, and all who wear it after you, feel the strength and love of its enfolding prayers."

Presenting the charge and installing Kraybill in office were Wilma Ann Bailey, Grantham, Pa., representing the Mennonite Board of Education, and Victor Kliewer, Leamington, Ont., representing the Mennonite Biblical Seminary Board of Trustees.

In his response to the charge, Kraybill noted several hopes for AMBS: that AMBS will "hold together love for God and the Scriptures and high academic standards"; continue to grow in expressions of prayer, worship and spiritual disciplines; "rediscover for our generation the joy of evangelism and mission"; strengthen ties with the church, and that at AMBS God will mold leaders of conviction and courage.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, and former assistant dean of AMBS, brought the inaugural address.

Reflecting on texts about the river of life from Ezekiel and Revelation, she shared what the writers of these two texts might say at the inauguration of a seminary president.

"Try suggesting that the leaders and maybe that new president dip their feet into some waters coming from the Holy One," Nickel Friesen imagined Ezekiel saying. "Walk around in the puddles of God's love. Wade in streams of mercy, compassion and hope. Your faith will be nourished by these deep streams."

John of Patmos, according to Nickel Friesen, would say, "Presidents and others must lead ... with their feet in the river of life. That water comes from a life of prayer and singing, from service and witness, from loneliness and suffering. That water will run deep and run forever."

Kraybill fills the position of AMBS president formerly held by Marlin E. Miller, who died unexpectedly in November 1994. Most recently Willard M. Swartley, AMBS dean, had been serving as acting president. *Mary E. Klassen*

J. Tyler Klassen

Charge to service: *Kraybill (left), Kliewer, Bailey*

The Amsterdam (Netherlands) charity Voila arranges tours in which people pay to be homeless for a day. The 45-guilder ($24 U.S.) fee, split between Voila and the tour guide—a homeless person—buys a day of walking, visiting shelters and scrounging for food. At 9 a.m. on the day of the tour, participants empty their pockets of money, credit cards and cigarettes. Lunch is two pieces of stale bread. Changing into rags is optional. When the weather gets warmer, Voila will begin offering three-day "survival weekends." (*Wichita Eagle*)

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"Singing at the Fire: Voices of the Anabaptist Martyrs," a presentation by Shirley Sprunger King, associate professor of music and chair of the music department at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has been selected as the C. Henry Smith Peace Lectureship for 1996-97. King's performance, a combination of organ recital and lecture, explores both original martyr hymn texts and 20th-century poetic reflections on early Anabaptist martyrdom, including the mystical concept of "gelassenheit" (self-surrender) that sustained martyrs through their suffering.

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Trinity Western University will host a conference May 6-8 on "NGOs, Humanitarian Relief and Complex Emergencies." The conference will examine the theological, ethical and operational challenges that complex emergencies, such as civil war, pose for church-related relief and development agencies (often called non-governmental organizations, or NGOs). Canadian Foodgrains Bank, World Vision Canada and Mennonite Central Committee are conference co-sponsors. Ron Sider and John Paul Lederach will be among the keynote speakers. For additional information, contact Mark Charlton (e-mail charlton@twu.ca) or Harold Harder (e-mail: harder@twu.ca) or write NGO Conference, Trinity Western University, 7600 Glover Road, Langley, BC V2Y 1Y1.

A sweepstakes notice that arrived earlier this year at the Bushnell Assembly of God Church announced that God, of Bushnell, Fla., was a finalist for the $11 million prize. "I always thought God lived here, but I didn't actually know," says Bill Brack, pastor of the 140-member congregation located 60 miles north of Tampa. "Now I do. He's got a p.o. box here." "God, we've been searching for you," American Family Publishers wrote in the letter. It continued, "What an incredible fortune there would be for God! Could you imagine the looks you'd get from your neighbors? But don't just sit there, God." Brack says his congregation is considering mailing in the entry because the church could use the money. (*Wichita Eagle*)

• • •

On Feb. 26, workers at Classic Apparel, a clothing assembly factory in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, stopped sewing Pocahontas dresses for two hours to protest management's refusal to hear their grievances. After five months of stalling, factory owner Marie-Claude Bayard met with the employees March 5 but refused to consider any of their demands. Instead, he hired security guards to intimidate the workers. Like most other assembly factory employees, workers at Classic Apparel make minimum wage, or 36 gourdes ($2.18 U.S.) per day. Transportation and lunch usually cost about 18 gourdes a day. Walt Disney Corp. was projected to make nearly $1 billion in 1996 from licensing agreements with companies like H.H. Cutler, which subcontracts to Classic Apparel. On March 13, Pierre Shantz, Waterloo, Ont., and Joshua Yoder, Chicago, members of Christian Peacemaker Teams in Haiti, went to the factory at employees' invitation. They asked to speak to the management and see the factory but were turned away by guards. The workers are pushing ahead with demands for a salary of 75 gourdes ($4.54 U.S.) a day and lower daily production quotas, despite the new threat from security guards, who told one worker, "If you get in the way of my gun, it's your fault." (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

Rebel troops near Mennonite areas in Zaire

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—On Feb. 18, Mennonite Central Committee workers Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya reported that three MiGs (Russian fighter planes) had dropped four or five bombs on Bukavu, Zaire, where the couple lives, the previous day. They were not injured and at this point intend to remain in Bukavu.

Rigalo said bombs landed on two markets during the late afternoon, when many people were out shopping, and that nine people were killed and approximately 40 wounded.

> **"Most people are not nearly as afraid of the rebels as they are of potential looting by Zairian soldiers."**
>
> ***Bruce Janz***

One bomb landed about 22 yards behind the home of Evette and Dieu Donne Kalamuna, the Zairian couple sent by the Zairian Mennonite Brethren church to serve as missionaries in Bukavu.

As of March 21, rebel troops were on the brink of entering Kasai Oriental, Kasai Occidental and possibly Bandundu, the three provinces where most of Zaire's 140,000 Mennonites live. Rebels recently captured the key city of Kisangani.

However, "most people are not nearly as afraid of the rebels as they are of potential looting by Zairian soldiers," says Bruce Janz, co-director of Mennonite Central Committee programs in Zaire.

Zairian rebels captured Bukavu in October 1996, after several days of fighting. Many residents fled into the forests. They are returning to find their houses and farms in disarray. Defeated Zairian government troops, who often serve unpaid, and fleeing Rwandan refugees ransacked houses and stripped fields of crops nearly ready for harvest.

Despite uncertainty about the future, Bukavu is currently calm enough for Rigalo and Lumeya to work at addressing both short-term needs for relief and long-term reconstruction. With the Church of Christ of Zaire's relief committee, MCC will supply food, blankets, medicine, seeds and tools to needy Zairians.

This is the same relief committee with which MCC worked from 1994 to 1996. Then, the task was to aid Rwandan refugees. Now war has come home.

The fate of the Rwandan refugees who had been living in four MCC-supported camps around Bukavu is still unknown. Unlike those near Goma, Zaire, most Rwandan refugees in the Bukavu area did not head back to Rwanda when war broke out in Zaire. Instead they fled north or west into Zaire.

Those MCC assisted are believed to be among the "lost" refugees in the dense Zairian jungle about 186 miles west of Bukavu, out of reach of aid agencies.

In response to MCC's pre-Christmas appeal, North Americans donated 26,000 blankets for people in Zaire. These blankets, plus more than 1,700 school kits, were scheduled for shipment to Africa in mid-February.

At the time of shipment, Rigalo and Lumeya were still puzzling over how to get the blankets through Rwanda to Zaire—the difficult final leg of the journey. Vehicles traveling the winding road through the forest between Kigali (in Rwanda) and Bukavu have been attacked recently, probably by Rwandan Hutu militants.

"It's difficult when we know material aid is available and that people in Bukavu are in need. It's just this war that keeps mucking things up," wrote a frustrated Rigalo in a recent e-mail message to MCC headquarters.

MCC plans to store the blankets in a warehouse in Kigali. As the security situation permits, MCC's Zairian church partners will make the daylong round-trip drive to collect a few bales of blankets at a time. If the situation suddenly changes for the better, the blankets will be transported by truck convoy for a one-time distribution as originally planned.

Along with thousands of blankets, supporters contributed more than $260,000 U.S./$350,000 Cdn. to MCC designated for the "Central Africa Healing Fund." A portion of the money will go to purchase seeds and tools to replace those looted in the recent fighting and some will be used to buy

Record

DEATHS

Henry Schmidt died Dec. 30, 1996, at age 69. He was pastor and leader at Dunnville (Ont.) Church for 34 years.

MINISTERS

David Bergen has resigned as associate pastor at First Church, Calgary.

Walt Braun is pastor at Tofield (Alta.) Church.

Dennis Fehr is resigning as pastor at Zion Church, Swift Current, Sask., effective May 30.

Ray and **Sylvia Friesen** will be pastors at Zion Church, Swift Current, Sask., beginning June 1.

Howard Habegger is retiring as pastor at Silverwood Church, Goshen, Ind., in August.

Randy Hildebrand was ordained as youth pastor April 13 at Steinbach (Man.) Church.

Bill Kruger has resigned as pastor at Osler (Sask.) Church effective in August.

Don and **Kathleen Rempel Boschman** will be pastors at Douglas Church, Winnipeg, beginning June 1.

Jacob Thiessen has resigned as pastor at Hope Church, North Battleford, Sask.

YES—Youth Evangelism Service

WORKERS

Fox

Lehman

Mary Burkholder, executive secretary for Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, will retire Dec. 31.

Brian Fox, First Church, Berne, Ind., has begun a one-yearYES term in Hong Kong, teaching English and working with children's and youth groups.

Megan Lehman, First Church, Berne, Ind., has begun a four-month YES term in Brazil, working with street children.

Dan Nighswander has been named executive secretary for the Leadership Commission of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the position of **assistant director of Communi-ty Ministries** with MCC U.S. in Akron, Pa. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position. Qualifica-tions include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking.

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact **Dwight McFadden** or **Sandra Franklin** at **MCC Personnel Department, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151;** e-mail: **SLF@mcc.org.** Applications due **April 30, 1997.**

The Hesston (Kan.) College women's basketball team competed in the National Junior College Athletic Association Division II national tournament at Hagerstown (Md.) Junior College, March 19-22. The Larks earned their trip by defeating Redlands Community College (El Reno, Okla.) 55-52 to capture the District B title March 8. This was Hesston's first trip to nationals in women's basketball. In the opening round, the team fell to Genesee Community College (Batavia, N.Y.) 88-80 in double overtime.

• • •

Kauther Salem, a Palestinian journalist and friend of Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron, West Bank, was severely beaten March 12 while covering the beginning construction of Israeli settlements near Kiryat Arba and the ensuing clash between Palestinians and Israeli Defense Force soldiers. Salem was thrown to the ground, kicked and dragged by her hair for 20 to 30 feet before being taken to a police station and left on the floor for several hours. She was later admitted to Hadesseh Hospital in Jerusalem. Another journalist said that he has not seen such brutality from IDF soldiers since the 1994 mosque massacre in Hebron or the days of the Intifada ("uprising" by Palestinian civilians). (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

• • •

Twelve members of a 21-person Mennonite mission team to Albania reached Brindisi, Italy, safely on March 14 on an Italian naval vessel from Durres, Albania. An additional nine Mennonite team members had evacuated earlier from southern Albania, some to the Greek island of Corfu and others directly to the United States. "We spent all night on the dock waiting for a boat, and there were bullets flying everywhere," says Dwayne Musser, leader of a six-member Youth Evangelism Service team. The rapidly deteriorating political order in tiny Albania, population 3 million, resulted from failed pyramid investment schemes. Almost all Albanians lost money, some their entire life savings. (*Carol L. Wert*)

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food to tide people over until the next harvest and for MCC's ongoing forestry and peace work.

MCC will also purchase and distribute malaria medicine. When Rigalo and Lumeya attended a Christmas service at the newly established Mennonite church in Bukavu, they were delighted to see 75 attenders, the largest group ever. But as they reunited with old friends, they discovered another tragic aspect of the war. An unknown number of Zairians who hid in the forest during the fighting fell victim to a deadly strain of malaria. Children were especially susceptible. One family, for example, left Bukavu with five children and came back with only two.

During the fighting, Zairians were able to protect two of the three MCC tree nurseries in Bukavu, signaling the value they place on planting trees.

From July 1994 to October 1996, several hundred thousand Rwandan refugees were camped around Bukavu. Each day they cut more than 70 tons of wood for fuel, stripping the hillsides of trees. As a result, Zairians said they noticed temperature changes and soil erosion. Rigalo continues to oversee the forestry project.

Lumeya is re-establishing contact with members of the peace committees with which he had been working. He reports a renewed interest in peace, given people's recent exposure to the devastation of war.

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For more information, contact Missy Stoner at the address below or e-mail mas@ mccus.org

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Admissions counselor: Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., is curently accepting applications for the position of full-time **admissions counselor**. Reponsibilities will include contact with potential students through high school visits, telephone, correspondence and campus visits. Required qualifications include: excellent communication and organizational skills and ability to work independently. Bachelor's degree and evening and weekend hours required. Bethel College is a small, private, four-year, liberal arts college associated with the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Forward letter of application and resume with references by **April 30, 1997**, to **Bev Mayer, Director of Human Resources, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117; (316) 284-5237**; fax: **(316) 284-5286**.

Nanny wanted: Looking for a mature individual to take care of two grade school-aged children and do light housekeeping. Salary negotiable, minimum $6/hour. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Wichita, Kan., near Maple and 119th St.

Call **(316) 942-0422**.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following positions open for the 1997-98 school year: **English instructor; social studies/ Bible instructor; director of food services; orchestra/band director** (25 percent).

Send resumes or inquiries to **Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Rosthern Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Sask., invites applications for a full-time **youth pastor**. The position requires a mature, enthusiastic person who indicates a strong Christian faith and who can relate to youth in the church and community. Bible college graduate preferred.

Resumes should be mailed **by June 1** to the **Search Committee, Box 519, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0**.

First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., seeks a full-time **associate pastor**. Ministry will focus on young adults and young families, evangelism and outreach, and Christian education.

Reply to **Don Schmidt, Search Committee Chair, First Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 291, Newton, KS 67114.**

Academia Menonita (PK-12) has an open position for **school director**. Requirements: M.A. or Ph.D. in educational administration, minimum of five years administrative experience in education.

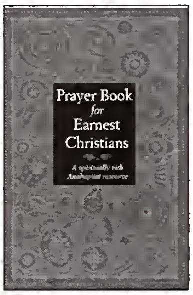
If interested, contact **Francie Nassar-Fischle** at **(787) 783-1295**, fax **(787) 783-1280**, or **Academia Menonita, 1751 Asomante St., Summit Hills, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00920.**

First Mennonite Church, Burns Lake, B.C., is an established congregation inviting applications for the position of full-time **pastor** starting this summer / fall. Burns Lake is a community of 2,500 set in the scenic Lakes District of central British Columbia.

Please submit your resume to **Pastor Search Committee, c/o Gerald Dyck, RR 1, Site 1B, Comp 4, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1B0.**

Education: Bluffton College announces a full-time, interim position in **education** for 1997-98. Rank dependent on qualifications. Master's considered; doctorate preferred. The successful candidate will hold an advanced degree in elementary education; evidence of effective teaching crucial and graduate level teaching preferred. Responsibilities include teaching graduate and undergraduate education courses in foundation, curriculum methods, classroom management and educational research as well as placement and supervision of student teachers. Consideration of applications will begin immediately and continue until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at **http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.**

Send letter of interest, resume or vita, three letters of reference, and unofficial transcripts to **Amy Tabler, Assistant to the VP and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, Ohio 45817-1196**. EOE



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Reviews

MUSIC

TRADITION WITH A TWIST

Sprout Wings and Fly *by John McCutcheon (Rounder, 1997, $14.98 U.S. CD, $9.98 U.S. audiocassette)*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

John McCutcheon
sprout wings and fly

I've been listening to John McCutcheon since I was a teenager living in eastern Kentucky and he, a native of Wisconsin, was part of an intentional community in Dungannon, Va., not so far from home. I still think his first two albums, *How Can I Keep From Singing?* and *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, released more than 20 years ago on the Whitesburg, Ky.-based June Appal label, are two of the best traditional recordings I've ever heard.

Although McCutcheon has consistently and prolifically turned out excellent work since then, including Grammy-nominated children's recordings and more and more of his own fine songwriting, I've been waiting a long time for another "traditional" album from him. *Sprout Wings and Fly* is it.

With a twist, though—frequently the new sounds old and the old has been revisited with nontraditional instruments. The first song, "Who'll Rock the Cradle," is a McCutcheon original but sounds like it could have come from the repertoires of the many Southern Appalachian old-time musicians McCutcheon counts as mentors.

The "old in new wrapping" is especially evident on the traditional songs "Reuben" (McCutcheon on vocal, five- and six-string banjo and mountain dulcimer and three other musicians on Australian didgeridoos, hand drum and log drum, and talking drum) and "Oh Death" (McCutcheon on vocal, banjo, six- and 12-string guitars, others on didgeridoo, djimbe and talking drum).

The title and the CD cover evoke the current "angel craze" (tongue-in-cheek, I suspect; the title comes from the traditional "Jack of Diamonds"), but this album is far from New Age. McCutcheon pays tribute to many of the musicians who have influenced him over the years, from Paul van Arsdale (hammer dulcimer) to I.D. Stamper (mountain dulcimer) to Tommy Jarrell (fiddle) to Wry Straw (McCutcheon and two others, on his third and last June Appal album).

Sprout Wings and Fly is less overtly "political" than recent McCutcheon recordings. Yet "Ludlow Massacre," a less well-known Woody Guthrie song about an incident from union organizing in the early part of this century in Ludlow, Colo., is as poignant a statement—its emotion aided by addition of a cello—on worker oppression as any McCutcheon recording has ever been.

McCutcheon is joined on this recording by Tim and Mollie O'Brien, Robin and Linda Williams, Iris DeMent and a host of other fine musicians, but he's the one who really shines on the fiddle and banjo we haven't heard much of in recent recordings. Be sure and add this one to your folk music collection.

BOOKS

LIFE AND DEATH TOGETHER

I Tell You a Mystery: Life, Death and Eternity *by Johann Christoph Arnold (Plough, 1996, 176 pages, $12 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Ann Showalter, Hesston, Kan.

In the introduction, the author writes, "This book is about dying, yes, but the heart of its message is about living." The book is a gentle, warm, pastoral reflection on living and dying in the Bruderhof communities. People of the Bruderhof live communally without private ownership of property. They gather daily for meals, worship, prayer, inspiration and decision making. They believe the call to follow Christ includes bearing one another's burdens in all of life, including serious illness, accidents and death.

Since daily life and work all take place within the community, people of the Bruderhof are available to provide a level of support and care more difficult to duplicate for those of us who live in single-family settings. Someone is always nearby to offer comfort and encouragement in times of need. They are not afraid to "weep with those who weep." There is no denial of the painfully shattering experience of death even as they find peace, confi-

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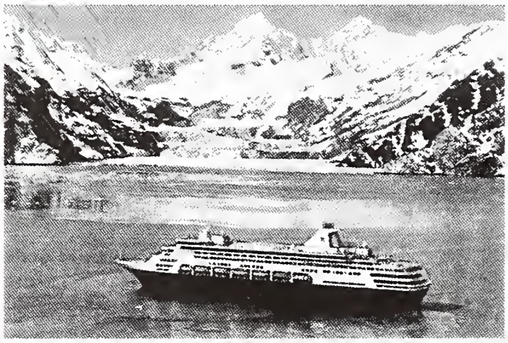

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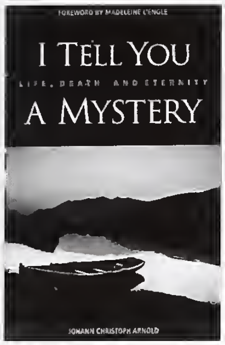

dence and hope through God's living presence in the community. The book radiates a dynamic hope in resurrection—an understanding that death does not have the last word.

One senses a profound reverence for life: including the elderly, the infirm, infants, young children and youth. Every life is seen as having great worth regardless of how brief. This is combined with deep faith in the power of prayer and gratitude for the best resources medical science has to offer. Occasionally a person will, after intense medical treatment, choose to forego further therapies in favor of trusting God for whatever may come. Such a choice sometimes results in a far greater measure of health and longer life than was ever expected medically.

The book is easy, inspiring reading, offering rich insights into what it means to live and die within the loving embrace of God's care as mediated through the community.

Resources

- **Kids and Conflict: Resolving Problems the Jesus Way** by Eleanor Snyder (Faith & Life Press, 1997, $32.95 U.S./ $46.95 Cdn.), part of the Living Stones series, is a multiuse curriculum for children on conflict resolution. To order call 1-800-743-2484 (U.S.) or (204) 888-6781 (Canada).
- **Making the News: A Media Relations Manual for Nonprofit Organizations** by John Longhurst (Windflower Communications, 1996, $6.99 Cdn.) is a practical guide in learning about and working with the media.
- **Prayer Book for Earnest Christians**, translated and edited by Leonard Gross (Herald Press, 1997, $8.99 U.S./ $12.85 Cdn.) contains prayers prayed by Anabaptists 300 years ago.
- **Menno Simons: His Image and Message** by Sjouke Voolstra (Bethel College, 1997) is part of the C.H. Wedel Historical Series. Order from Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117-0531; e-mail mla@bethelks.edu; before July 1, $12.50 U.S.; after July 1, $18 U.S.
- **Dignity and Dying: A Christian Appraisal**, edited by John F. Kilner, Arlene B. Miller and Edmund D. Pellegrino (Eerdmans, 1996, $19 U.S.) contains essays on dying, suffering, end-of-life issues and alternatives to the premature ending of life.
- **Mujerista Theology** by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz (Orbis, 1996, $16 U.S.) is an introduction to Hispanic feminist theology.

The Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites applications for the position of **director of information technology** beginning July 1, 1997. The director is responsible for all administrative and academic computer support including a local area network, about 45 IBM-compatible PCs running Windows 95, internet access services and a web site. The director must be self-motivated and have a high capacity for continued learning in the field of information technology. The director must be creative and have good problem-solving skills as well as the ability to instruct computer users. Familiarity with instructional computing technologies is highly desirable. The contract for this position is 80% (.8 FTE), although less time may be negotiated in 1997. The Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, an equal opportunity employer, is committed to the preparation of Mennonite church leaders.

Send a letter of application, resume and three professional references to **Jacob Elias, Administrative Vice President, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; (219) 296-6201**; fax: **(219) 295-0092**; e-mail: **jelias@ambs.edu**; web site: **http: www.ambs.edu**. Further information available upon request. Applications will be accepted until May 31 or until the position is filled.

Position in preparatory music program: Suzuki violin teacher for studio of 30+ students in Books 1-5 and two groups beginning Aug. 25. Must have SAA teacher training in Books 1-5 preferred as well as bachelor of music degree and strong performance ability. Suzuki teaching experience required as well as an enthusiastic ability to communicate with children and parents.

Send letter of application, resume, cassette and references to **Sharon M.D. Miller, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.**

Eastern Mennonite University seeks to fill the following positions:

Area coordinator (1 each—**women's** and **men's residence hall**): 10-month, full-time, live-in position. Responsible for supervision of resident assistants, residence directors, social and educational programming to meet students' needs, personal adjustment counseling and referral and general administration of residence hall. Master's degree required. Bachelor's degree considered with appropriate experience. Previous experience in college student affairs preferred. Administrative, supervisory and communication skills and an understanding of student development process required; must be a Christian and supportive of EMU's mission and policies. Physical requirements: walking stairs, lifting; requires irregular evening and weekend hours. Beginning date: July 15, 1997.

Residence director (2): 9-month, live-in position (Aug. 11-May 15). Responsible for supervision of six or seven resident assistants, social and educational programming to meet students' needs, disciplinary and personal adjustment counseling and referral and daily administration of the residence hall. Bachelor's degree required. Master's degree in progress preferred. Undergraduate residence hall living experience required. Previous experience in college student affairs required. Administrative, supervisory and communication skills and an understanding of student development process required; must be a Christian and supportive of EMU's mission and policies. Physical requirements: walking stairs, lifting; requires irregular evening and weekend hours. Beginning date: Aug. 11, 1997.

Application deadline for these positions: **April 30, 1997.** EMU reserves the right to fill these positions before the application deadline or to extend the deadline as circumstances may warrant.

Admissions counselor: 11-month, full-time position. Bachelor's degree, preferably from a Mennonite college. Responsible for new student recruitment primarily in Maryland, Delaware, Iowa, Oregon, West Virginia, Canada, with primary focus on Mennonite high schools and areas within these states/provinces having strong Mennonite concentrations. Must have an understanding of EMU programs and philosophy, knowledge of the Mennonite Church and experience relating to high school age students. Training in marketing/sales is helpful. Verbal and written communication skills required. Must be willing to travel regularly. Must have valid driver's license and good driving record. Beginning date: July 1, 1997.

Application deadline: **May 9, 1997.** EMU reserves the right to fill this position before the application deadline or to extend the deadline as circumstances may warrant.

Multiethnic people and women are encouraged to apply. If interested, please contact the **EMU Human Resources Office, (540) 432-4108**; e-mail **ebybj@emu.edu.**

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Editorial

Wasting creation

Our progress in technology has made us comfortable, too comfortable. And because we have become used to these comforts, we have difficulty seeing the ill effects of technology, on ourselves and on the earth.

In the March/April issue of *Mother Jones*, businessman, environmentalist and author Paul Hawken calls the United States "the most wasteful society on the planet." Who can argue? Besides the waste we can see—"traffic jams, irreparable VCRs, Styrofoam coffee cups, landfills"—there is the waste we cannot see—"Superfund sites, greenhouse gases, radioactive waste, vagrant chemicals; and the social waste we don't want to think about: homelessness, crime, drug addiction, our forgotten infirm and elderly."

Such a state of affairs is certainly not what God desires. The apostle Paul's description of "the whole creation ... groaning" (Romans 8:22) seems as vivid and real as ever.

Hawken shows how modern industrialism developed in a world with "fewer people, less material well-being, plentiful natural resources." Now the situation is reversed, with more people chasing fewer natural resources, yet industry still operates by the same rules, "using more resources to make fewer people more productive." The result is massive waste of resources and people.

We see this everywhere. I see it in the production of this magazine. With newer technology, we are producing *The Mennonite* with less staff time. Most consider this good, but what about those who have lost jobs?

Around the globe, more and more people are competing for fewer jobs, and increasing numbers are being forced to leave the farms and villages where they sustained themselves for generations and move to urban areas, with their congestion of cars and factories.

How do we change this cycle? Unlike most of us, the Amish at least consider new technology and weigh its impact on their community life. But they have their own problems, with large families and less land to work.

There are people thinking in new ways about how to work at renewing instead of depleting the earth's resources. Hawken proposes what he calls "natural capitalism." When we look at capital, he writes, we tend to overlook the natural systems that operate around us. "Only when the benefits nature provides are disrupted do we take notice." How do we value natural capital, e.g., a 700-year-old tree? "We need only ask how much it would cost to make a new one. Or a new river, or even a new atmosphere."

Hawken looks at the many ways the United States creates waste. His article, too long to adequately summarize, is chock full of statistics and ideas. For instance,

- We [Americans] spend $50 billion a year to guard sea-lanes and to protect oil sources we would not need if President Reagan had not gutted automobile emission standards in 1986.
- We spend nearly $200 billion a year in supplementary energy costs because we do not employ the same energy efficiency standards for our businesses and homes as do the Japanese.
- We waste around $65 billion on nonessential or fraudulent medical tests and, by some estimates, $250 billion on inflated overhead generated by the current health insurance system.
- Legal, accounting, auditing, bookkeeping and record-keeping expenditures to comply with an unnecessarily complex and unenforceable tax code cost citizens at least $250 billion a year.
- Crime costs taxpayers $450 billion a year; lawsuits, $300 billion.
- Over 5 million men are in prison, waiting for trial, on probation or on parole. And we keep building prisons, even though "there is no cost difference between incarceration and an Ivy League education; the main difference is curriculum."

What does it mean to be faithful followers of Christ in such a wasteful society? How should we view our standard of living, the way we do business, the technologies we use? Emerson Wiens quotes Thoreau (page 8), who called inventions "pretty toys [that] distract our attention from serious things."

Should we not pay attention to serious things like the livability of our earth or how our ways of living already affect most of the world's people and will affect our children? We must, for to waste so massively God's creation is a sin that requires repentance, a change of thinking and behavior. *Gordon Houser*

Recyclable

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MCs give cautious nod to merger proposals / p. 13

Film review: *Sling Blade* / p. 22

$2.00

THE Mennonite

no one can lay any ation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 09
MAY 13, 1997

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Transformed IN CHRIST

Stories from the work of the General Conference Mennonite Church

- The work of transformation (page 3)
- Fears transformed into joy (page 5)
- Four generations come to Christ (page 8)

Prologue

You are all invited to this summer's special session of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), to be held July 6-8 in Winnipeg.

This issue serves as background to that meeting. Here you will find reports from the various GC programs. Each report focuses on how the particular program is working toward the transformation in Christ we are all called to experience. As you read the stories and view the pictures, remember that this work happens only because of your partnership in it. Your support, through prayer, through giving money, through your own service, makes the transformations mentioned here possible.

The conference will include not only business but times of worship and singing, workshops and lots of visiting with friends old and new. If you are interested in attending, your pastor should have registration forms. Or you may contact Winnipeg '97, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, (316) 283-5100.

As summer approaches, you may want to refer to Marlene Kropf's column (page 12) on how to make your vacation time truly refreshing by using it to take a retreat.

As you read the news, be in prayer for people experiencing famine in North Korea (page 14), war in Zaire (page 17) and flooding in the northern plains and southern Manitoba.

May God's transforming Spirit guide us all. *gh*

Next issue: Mennonites becoming Catholics

Cover: Photos from GC files

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General
Conference
Mennonite
Church

Reports from the General Conference Mennonite Church

The work of transformation

The following reports will be part of the workbook for this summer's special session of the General Conference Mennonite Church, to be held July 6-8 in Winnipeg.

General Board

Historians will view Wichita '95 as a watershed in Mennonite history. Since then the General Board has been responding to the decision to integrate with the Mennonite Church.

The General Conference (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) general boards have decided to meet concurrently from now on, discussing common agenda together.

The board has approved the Integration Committee's recommendation of the name Mennonite Church for the new denomination. Despite the fact that the name is already carried by our sister denomination, the board made its choice after careful consideration of this, along with other implications. In the end it seemed that the simpler the name, the better; in addition, for the sake of an unambiguous explanation of our identity and witness to society, the straightforward name seemed best.

The board has also given the nod to further examination of a proposed composition of a new General Board, suggestions for program boards, a new periodical, an assembly structure with proposals for the selection of delegates. They also approved further exploration of a regional paradigm that would mean that the new denomination relates to conferences in regional groupings. Denominational staff would also be housed in each of these regions.

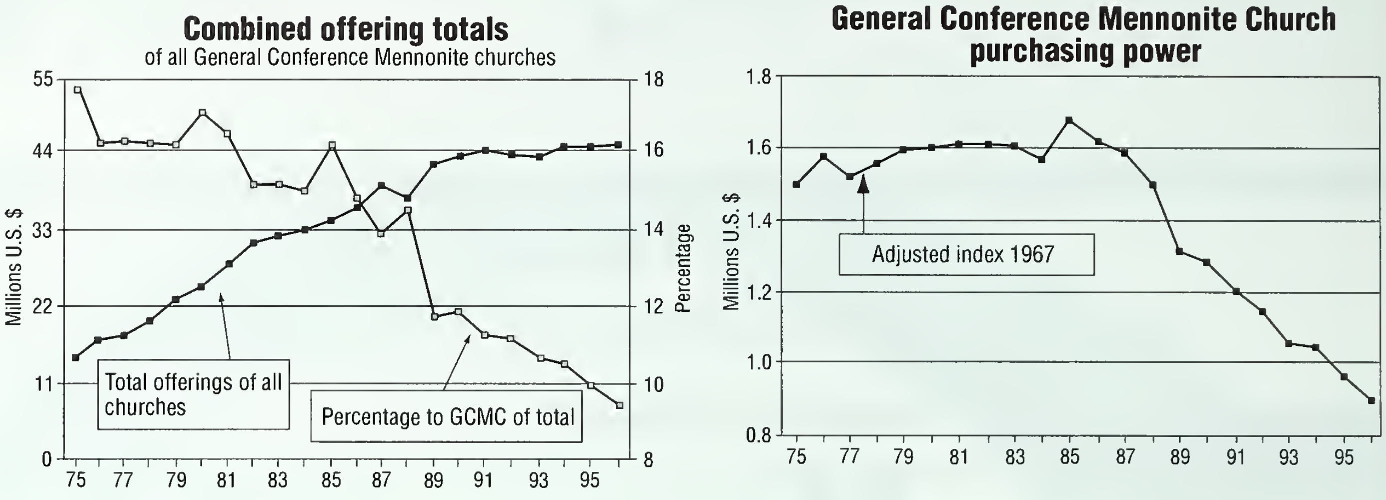
Consideration of the regional concept has already helped bring clarity to issues of the relationship of Canadian and U.S. GCs. Canada would be one of four proposed North American regions in the new structure. The opportunities and challenges of three regions in the United States will be examined in meetings with district conferences later this year.

A new MC/GC Interim Ministerial Leadership Committee is replacing the Committee on the Ministry that has been attached to the Ministerial Leadership office under the General Board.

Higher education: The Higher Education Council, which draws together college administrators and board members from GC schools, operates as an arm of the General Board, speaking for the denomination in integration matters. "Mennonite Higher Education: Theory and Practice" is the name of an inter-Mennonite consultation that focuses on the distinctives of a Mennonite philosophy of education, meeting June 13-15 at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, in connection with that school's 50th anniversary.

Vern Preheim completed 15 years of service, and James Schrag assumed the duties of General Secretary in August 1996. The board expressed its gratitude to Preheim and their pledge of support to Schrag.

The General Board is charged with the care of the whole of the denomination, providing a meeting place for commissions, seminary, conferences and congregations. It is grateful for assurances that conference leaders are in the prayers of many GC members and for the strong financial support of congregations and individuals that achieved the goals of the conference budget in 1996, for the first time in 10 years. Generous support of this kind allows the conference to move ahead with confidence and resolve, its program intact, toward new opportunities contained in merger with the Mennonite Church. *James Schrag, General Secretary for the General Conference Mennonite Church*



Giving by all General Conference churches to all causes increased every year until 1987. After a drop in 1988, the rise continued until 1991, followed by a slight decline (1996 figures estimated). Recent experience suggests a leveling off of total giving. The decline in giving not only affects churches but the work of the conference. Furthermore, the percentage given to the General Conference has declined from 17.6 percent in 1979 to 9.5 percent in 1996. (Graphs are calculated from reports supplied by churches.)

Division of General Services

The Division of General Services (DGS) provides communication, stewardship, fund-raising and financial services and support to the General Conference, the commissions and seminary.

For the first time in a decade, income for fiscal year 1996 exceeded our financial goal, totaling $4,389,437 U.S., or 102.8 percent of budget. We are grateful to God and thank you for your support of the conference in 1996. Giving from congregations accounts for approximately 75 percent of conference income, direct giving from individuals makes up 15 percent, and the remaining 10 percent comes from other sources such as estate and interest income.

DGS continues to emphasize stewardship through Mark Vincent and Michele Hershberger's work with The Giving Project. The Giving Project is not about fund-raising; it is about celebrating our past generosity, increasing our current generosity and passing on our values of generosity to future generations of Christians. In the past few months, 13 focus congregations helped identify Christian beliefs about money. Their statements form the backbone of several resources, including a new book, *A Christian View of Money: Celebrating God's Generosity.* A companion piece, *Teaching a Christian View of Money: Celebrating God's Generosity,* will provide resources for congregations to work with stewardship issues. Nearly 400 congregations have registered their interest in participating in the project, five times the number originally anticipated. The project, which will be launched officially this summer, is sponsored by the General Conference, Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC), Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries of the Mennonite Church, and Mennonite Mutual Aid.

Giving from congregations accounts for approximately 75 percent of conference income.

Communications: Staff and board members are making plans for a new, integrated Mennonite periodical to succeed *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald.* A parallel Mennonite periodical is being developed in Canada.

Work is also taking place on an integrated directory of denominational information. Since spring 1996, editors and other staff representing the General Conference, CMC and the Mennonite Church have developed and tested prototypes of a single book that will replace their three separate handbooks/yearbooks. The integrated book is to be released in fall 1998. Related to the directory is data collection. Plans are under way to develop a uniform data collection and storage system for the new denomination, one that will serve the needs of the directory, fund-raising, ministerial leadership and others at congregational, area conference and denominational levels. *Dave Linscheid, communications director*

Transformed
IN CHRIST

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

In March, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary celebrated the inauguration of J. Nelson Kraybill, the second president of AMBS, the joining of Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Goshen Biblical Seminary, which began their cooperation in 1958.

Nelson's appointment and inauguration highlight some priorities of the seminary: a growing commitment to mission and evangelism, and a renewed delight in worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines. With recent mission experience in London, England, Nelson brings insights in sharing the gospel of Christ on the cutting edge of the church.

This commitment to mission and evangelism is supported by several generous gifts to the AMBS Partners for Ministry campaign. With these gifts, AMBS has launched an annual summer Mission and Evangelism Institute with courses devoted to sharing the gospel in our culture as well as around the world. *Mary E. Klassen, AMBS information services*

J. Tyler Klassen

Erland Walter, the first president to serve on the Elkhart, Ind., campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, greets the new AMBS president, J. Nelson Kraybill, and Ellen, his wife, following Kraybill's inauguration service on March 16. Nelson wears a prayer shawl woven of strips of linen on which people had written prayers for him as president of AMBS.

Fears transformed into joy

For the pastor and the church member

When Mario and Maria Eugenia moved to Chicago from New York City 2 1/2 years ago, their marriage was disintegrating. In fact, Mario moved first, and Maria thought she might not follow him.

But she did move with her daughter to Mario's small basement apartment and soon became involved with nearby Comunidad de Fe, a General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) congregation. One Sunday Mario accompanied her to the worship service but left after about 10 minutes, telling Ingrid Schultz, the pastor, that he was not comfortable and would not be back.

When Mario lost his construction job soon after that, Ingrid went to visit them. Together they read the Bible, and Mario gave his problem and his life to the Lord.

Now Maria and Mario are both involved in the congregation and are students of the GC Instituto Biblico Anabautista (Anabaptist Biblical Institute). Mario has been chosen to be one of the first 12 students of a new program for pastoral training within the Hispanic Mennonite churches.

Ingrid says, "If someone had told me this young man who was so reticent to even visit the church would begin pastoral studies two years later, I would have been surprised."

Ingrid herself is surprised to be involved with Comunidad de Fe in Chicago. Her home congregation is Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver. After serving two terms with Mennonite Central Committee in Bolivia, she began studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in 1989. She completed her third year of seminary study in Chicago with SCUPE, the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, because she wanted to "work in a Hispanic congregation and overcome my fears of the city." She says, "I'm grateful to God for transforming my fears into joy through ministering here in Chicago." *Mary E. Klassen*

AMBS enrollment data

	Students	FTE
1990-91	190	117.1
1991-92	187	109.5
1992-93	164	98.8
1993-94	143	84.6
1994-95	155	84.7
1995-96	169	106.8
1996-97	194	113.3

II Semester 203 students 118.1 FTE

File photo

Ingrid Schultz leads the service in which Mario and Maria Eugenia were baptized and joined Comunidad de Fe, a General Conference Mennonite Church congregation in Chicago.

Commission on Education

The mission of the Commission on Education is, "Enabling congregations to communicate the gospel." This is COE's way of capturing the Vision: Healing and Hope statement adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church at Wichita '95. It is COE's guide to serving congregations.

Since Wichita '95, COE has been busy. In cooperative agreement with Herald Press of the Mennonite Church, Faith & Life Press (the publishing side of COE) produced "A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership," a joint polity statement adopted at Wichita '95.

COE has also produced the first of three adult Bible studies to help explore the Vision: Healing and Hope statement. The first study, *Living the Vision: Spirituality and Stewardship*, challenges adults to become agents of healing and hope by focusing on the first two statements of the six priorities. Two other studies will focus on the remaining four priorities: leadership, hospitality, evangelism and peacemaking.

In September, congregations will begin a new year of *Jubilee: God's Good News* material. The Jubilee Sunday school curriculum is on a three-year cycle, and the first three years have come to an end. This joint project has helped assure a firm biblical foundation for the future leaders of our denomination and has changed the face of Sunday school. We offer thanks to those who developed the curriculum and to all the teachers who use Jubilee to make a difference in the lives of our children.

Aid to Christian Teaching (ACT) weekends continue to inspire, equip and enable Sunday school teachers to teach more effectively. ACT weekends have taken place most recently in Iowa and Pennsylvania. Six more are scheduled in the next two years, both in the United States and in Canada.

General Conference and Mennonite Church youth leaders have worked on a joint mission statement for youth ministry, which will be part of delegate materials to be presented at the conference this summer. It grows from the common ground that GC and MC youth ministry have shared for many years.

Look for a number of new initiatives in the coming months and years as COE looks at a new way to focus on family ministry. A roundtable discussion will be offered at the Winnipeg '97 conference. COE is looking at new adult Bible study electives. Also coming soon is a youth catechism based on the new Confession of Faith. Look for developments.

A cutting edge for COE is integration. For many years we have enjoyed cooperative projects with our ministry partners, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and Herald Press. Together we are called to discern God's will for helping constituents in the areas of Christian education and nurture. COE is poised to look at ways of serving the resource and educational needs of the new denomination.
Ken Hawkley, director of adult/young adult education

File photo

Inspire, equip and enable: *Participants at an Aid to Christian Teaching event in Iowa*

Commission on Home Ministries

When Maria Marquez became a Christian two years ago, she had had no formal Bible training. Now this 43-year-old mother of four is a student of the Anabaptist Biblical Institute, taking her first course, "Introduction to the Bible."

"This course has helped me a lot," she says. "It has helped me in understanding the Bible and helped me practice what I read. I am a new Christian, and these studies have helped me understand how to live a Christian life."

Maria is a member of House of the Lord, a Hispanic Mennonite congregation in La Puente, Calif. One of the study centers of the Anabaptist Biblical Institute is located in her congregation. She likes the weekly classes with the institute because the discussion times give her the opportunity to expand her knowledge. Transformation has happened in her life because of the institute, a Spanish-language leadership training program of the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM).

Mennonite Voluntary Service worker Laura Craik has been transformed by her work with Winnipeg Harvest. She writes, "Seeing the faces really brings reality to things. The applicants help unload for the food banks. Their eyes widen to see milk, bread, fruit and vegetables, something I always took for granted. I used to complain there was the wrong kind of milk, the wrong kind of bread, the wrong kind of fruit and vegetables. Now I realize how lucky I was to have anything at all."

The Anabaptist Biblical Institute and Mennonite Voluntary Service are just two of the programs of CHM that have been transforming lives during the past two years:

- CHM has made possible leadership training to Hispanic, Native, African-American and Asian-background people in Canada and the United States and to Hispanics in Mexico.
- Mennonite Voluntary Service, now a joint program with Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church, had 106 people in service at the beginning of 1997.

File photo

Holistic witness: *Marilyn Miller and Hugh Sprunger, Commission on Home Ministries staff, with Frank and Heather Liao, who are planting a Taiwanese church in North York, Ont., as part of the Toronto City on a Hill project*

- Through the encouragement of CHM staff, Chinese pastors wrote sermons on the topic of "Vision: Healing and Hope."
- LIFE (Living in Faithful Evangelism) was an impact for growth and renewal in 120 General Conference congregations, and plans are under way for a follow-up for LIFE alumni congregations and a new two-year LIFE process for congregations that did not previously participate in LIFE.
- With the help of resources from CHM, area conferences have brought into their membership 20 new congregations, and another 21 are emerging. The General Conference is well on the way to meeting the "Abraham and Sarah" goal of 50 new churches by 2001.
- Youth and young adults are confronting issues of conscientious objection to military service through the updated "Decide for Peace" packet, available in U.S. and Canadian versions.
- Mennonite churches in Toronto and Denver used their "City on a Hill" designations to promote new churches, peace witness, service and evangelism in a holistic way. This year's City on a Hill is the Vancouver area.

File photo

Reality: *Kerrin Short, a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker from Archbold, Ohio, helps a child with a puzzle at the East Dallas School.*

CHM will be transformed in the coming years through the integration process. We pray that no matter what the structures, lives will continue to be transformed through mission and service programs in North America. *Lois Barrett, executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries*

Commission on Overseas Mission

The vision of the prophet Isaiah comes to mind as the Commission on Overseas Mission witnesses what God is doing in many places of the world: "Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating. ... For I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight" (65:18).

God continues to create places and people. In many places, people are hearing and experiencing God's love and salvation mediated to them by COM workers. The vision of healing and hope is being shared 24 hours a day around the globe.

People in Macau (sometimes called "sin city" because of its gambling casinos and prostitutes) have the witness of four servants of Christ. New people in Thailand are being ministered to holistically by COM workers.

COM benefits immensely from 17 mission workers and three associates who come from Hispanic or Asian backgrounds. Most of these are serving people of their own ethnic origins. They share the message and life of transformation in Christ.

Of special interest and challenge is the changeover of Hong Kong from British rule to mainland Chinese rule beginning July 1. The Mennonite churches are facing this change with confidence, believing God will continue to guide and bless the church and its mission.

This year COM programs in Latin America integrated with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) of the Mennonite Church. Now 98 supported mission workers and 57 mission associates are serving Christ and the church in 34 countries of Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Each contributes to God's continuing creation of places and people for God's glory. Sheldon Sawatzky and John F. Lapp will serve COM and MBM jointly for the involvements in the huge continent of Asia, where half the population of the world is located. Other integration initiatives include working on common personnel opportunities, communications pieces and shared staff and commission or board meetings.

Danger and death: COM invites you to praise God for those coming to faith in Jesus Christ and for the places being touched by the power of the gospel. Pray for Zaire, Colombia, Northern Ireland and Lesotho, and for the workers there; in these countries social and political upheaval cause danger and death. Pray that God's healing and hope be experienced where COM ministers around the world so that Christ's transforming power may be realized. *Glendon Klaassen, executive secretary for the Commission on Overseas Mission*

File photo

Witnessing in 'sin city': *Participants in the Macau meeting are (standing) David Lin, Titus Liao, Tim Sprunger, Gin Hong, George Veith, Glenn Kauffman, Sheldon Sawatzky, Daniel Ngai, (sitting) Larry Kehler, Suanne Sprunger, Tobia Veith (with Marika), Shirley Liem, Matthew Veith and Andreas Christanday.*

Four generations come to Christ

Even though the Coyoacan area of Mexico City has only had a Mennonite witness for the last two to three years, in one family four generations are now part of the New Life Anabaptist Mennonite Church. The congregation emerged from the work of the Lord through Vicente Martinez Belmont.

Vicente is an alcoholic who had reached his last days. According to a doctor's diagnosis, he suffered from the most serious level of cirrhosis of the liver. Blood came from his mouth. His eyes inclined upward. He perspired constantly and had continuous hiccups. Several health centers refused to admit him as a patient.

His sister, who had become a Christian, told Carmen and Vicente Minino (Commission on Overseas Mission/ Mennonite Board of Missions workers) about Vicente. She asked for their prayers. The Mininos made brother

Women in Mission

During the last two years General Conference Women in Mission has financially supported the work of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), church leadership training for women and provided organizational support for our 280 women's groups across the United States and Canada. These time-tested priorities have been achieved through the efforts of many volunteer hours, local, regional and binational committee work and three part-time staff.

Window, the quarterly Women in Mission periodical, covered themes of stewardship, Communion, ministry and leadership, and discipleship. The annual study guide followed the two-year theme "Household of God" with studies written by Suzanne Lawrence on the Book of Ruth, and a mission study written by Commission on Overseas Mission worker Helen Dueck.

An integration task force for a women's organization was formed following Wichita '95, and was comprised of three women each from Women in Mission (GC) and Women's Missionary and Service Commission (Mennonite Church). The proposal created by this task force was distributed and revised many times until a final draft was approved by the joint executives in March. This document proposes a new integrated women's organization to begin Aug. 1. A mailing including the proposal, a letter of explanation, a governance structure, a slate of officers and a ballot was sent to women of both organizations to be returned by June 15. Results of the election will be announced at the July conferences in Winnipeg and Orlando (MC).

Three women in a car parked on the grounds of First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif., during the 1917 triennial sessions gave shape to 80 years of women's outpouring of love and service for the church. Women in Mission has provided a sustained and accessible opportunity for women's leadership and participation in decision making at all levels of their organization. Over the years the hours, dollars and prayers of these women are surpassed only by the women's awareness of what God the Giver has extended to each of them. *Susan Jantzen, Women in Mission coordinator*

FIRST MENNONI
CHURCH

Photo suplied by Louise Auernheimer

Eighty years of love and service for the church: *Taken in 1915, this photo shows the first women's group at First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif. They called themselves Galatians 2:20.*

* * *

Belmont's case their concern and called out to God for a miracle. Vicente was admitted to a health center and after four days was dismissed from the hospital, free of his sickness.

Vicente gave his life to Christ, who changed his life. His roles as husband and father changed. The family lives on a low income. God has guided them in solving conflicts in their family related to their income and Vicente's illness. Vicente's mother has accepted Christ and is involved in the Mennonite church, as are most of his children and grandchildren. Vicente is becoming a leader in the congregation, helping in many ways, including playing guitar and leading singing. *Glendon Klaassen*

Changed man: *Vicente Martinez plays guitar at a Sunday morning worship service.*

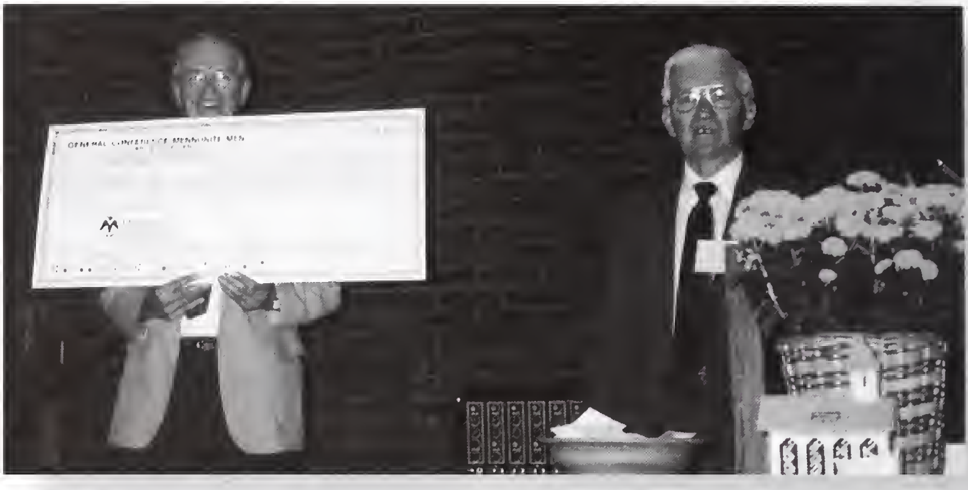
Mennonite Men

Last year Mennonite Men gave a $50,000 U.S. Tenth Man grant to Peace Mennonite Church, Aurora, Colo. This year grants are planned for congregations in Sioux Falls, S.D., and Dallas, Texas.

Changes are in the offing. We have a new opportunity to relate to interested men in congregations of the Mennonite Church. More than 250 MC congregations have expressed interest in Mennonite Men, and MC leaders have invited us to contact them.

Former Mennonite Men coordinator Heinz Janzen is phasing out of his position. Officers hope to name a new coordinator by conference time. Officers elected at the 1995 conference are giving creative leadership.

Men experience a great deal of unease these days. They seek ways to deal with job insecurity, technological change and moral collapse. Movements like Promise Keepers attract many. Mennonite Men aims to provide an Anabaptist perspective on manhood that speaks to current issues. We are open to suggestions on serving men in local congregations. *Heinz Janzen, interim coordinator for Mennonite Men*



Changes in the offing: *Mennonite Men coordinator Heinz Janzen holds a $50,000 check for Peace Mennonite Church, Aurora, Colo. At right is Mennonite Men treasurer Carl Thieszen.*

* * *

General Conference Mennonite Church

1997-98

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

64,431 members in 410 congregations
24,966 members in 130 churches in Canada
35,852 members in 268 churches in the United States
3,613 members in 12 South American churches
8,981 members in 75 associate congregations in Eastern Canada
3,400+ members in 77 nonaffiliated participating churches

GENERAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMS

100 mission workers plus 58 mission associates serve overseas.
117 voluntary service workers minister across North America.
34 people serve in Christian education networks across North America.
The Mennonite is published 24 times a year and *Der Bote* 48 times a year.
Ministerial Leadership Services provides assistance to pastors and congregations on the call and care of pastors.
Stewardship education and estate planning services are available through the Division of General Services.

GENERAL CONFERENCE BUDGET 1997

Commission on Overseas Mission	$2,426,441	58%
Commission on Home Ministries	$899,457	21.5%
Commission on Education	$376,517	9%
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary	$481,105	11.5%
Total	**$4,183,520**	**100%**

Of these amounts, the General Board uses $192,140 and the Division of General Services uses $594,248 for programs and support services. Included in the DGS total are $30,084 to support *The Mennonite* and $39,228 for *Der Bote*.

Letters

MISLEADING PHOTO

I'm writing in reference to a photo in the March 11 issue. On page 12, J.B. Miller discusses welfare reform and along with his article is a photo of what looks like an African-American child—no caption specific to the photo, but the context would have us assume that this is a child living in poverty and receiving government aid.

Two questions: Aren't there lots more white children receiving government aid than African-American? Are we inadvertently portraying a victim/welfare recipient that might reinforce our white race stereotypes?

Thanks for giving this some thought. *Becky Hofkamp, North Newton, Kan.*

Editor's note: *Yes, there are many more white children receiving government aid than African-American children. Good point.*

CORRECTION

In the Feb. 25 issue, page 21, a news item regarding the visitation of Quakers to our worship service was reported. We appreciate the coverage of a supportive act from another tradition. However, you referred to our relationship with Franconia Mennonite Conference and Eastern District Conference with the same description. We have been in formal conversation with FMC for the last three years that resulted in Germantown Mennonite Church being designated an associate member two years ago.

We have not had any formal conversations with Eastern District Conference about our inclusion of gay and lesbian people, nor has EDC taken any action toward Germantown Mennonite Church. I think some kind of correction would be helpful. Eastern District Conference does not need to be labeled as mirroring the actions of Franconia Mennonite Conference. *James L. Derstine, co-pastor of Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia*

SERVANTS AND CUSTOMERS

While I agree with Ray Bowman and Eddy Hall's basic premise that the church must be a servant, especially in the local community ("Put Your Church's Money Where Its Mission Statement Is," March 25 issue, page 3), the authors' repeated exhortations for believers not to be church "customers" were disconcerting.

I participate in a local congregation not only to give but also to get. I am unapologetically a customer of my congregation (and conference and denomination) because it has things I need. And I suspect this would be the case for everyone else as well. The church's products—to continue the customer analogy—are many: corporate worship, fellowship, education, nurture, support, accountability and counseling, as well as channels for outreach and service, just to identify a few. All these things are vital in helping us grow in our faith and practice of that faith.

In no way do I mean to suggest that local congregations and their members are to be entirely self-centered and self-serving. Bowman and Hall have shown that happens way too much. But as Mennonites, with our emphasis on community, neither can we eliminate the customer aspect of the local body of believers. I suspect the growth of the megachurches highlights the need for people to have their needs and wants addressed. And as very fallible, very imperfect humans, we all have needs and wants to be addressed if we are going to be healthy, productive servants. *Rich Preheim, Newton, Kan.*

SEND MAGAZINES AND BOOKS

Thank you for the sample issue of your magazine. The students really enjoy reading it. It was a true blessing.

We would be pleased if you could provide us with a gift subscription because of our economic situation. We appreciate your ministry through this magazine and we benefit from it.

We would also like to share some great news concerning the Romanian Bible Institute. A council, appointed by the Romanian parliament, has issued accreditation to our Bible Institute. This is truly a monumental accomplishment since there are only two other evangelical schools in all of Romania that are accredited.

Because of this accreditation we need to add more books and magazines to our library; any topics would be welcome. If you can send something, mail it to Romanian Bible Institute, P.O. Box 76-132, Bucharest, Romania.

If by any chance you have the opportunity to visit Eastern Europe, you are welcome to Romania and to our Bible Institute. *Dr. Ioan Ceuta, President, Romanian Bible Institute, Bucharest, Romania*

Editor's note: *We are sending a subscription to this Bible institute, but our overseas gift fund is depleted. Contributions are welcome.*

FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Saraba, Burkina Faso—Living in this small village has been a pleasure for both us and our children. It is soap-making season and how humbling it was to receive a ball of soap from most women. When our friend was asked by people in neighboring villages what the white people gave to Saraba in order for them to be so appreciated, the friend's response was, "I don't really know what they've done. They simply share with us in our daily life." We were touched by the sincerity of the benediction received at the celebration marking the end of the fasting month.

We had hoped to begin teaching the Bible stories chronologically to everyone as one group, but there is basically a split between the older and the younger, each with their own turf. So that meeting, where we would get everyone organized for teaching, never got off the ground. But relations are still positive, and we pray we will yet teach them all, even if separately. The "over-45" group organized themselves, and we have been teaching them daily for about 40 minutes each morning, arriving at the story of Jacob and Esau. *Loren and Donna Entz*

Learning to pray

Marlene Kropf serves as minister of worship and spirituality for the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and teaches spiritual formation and worship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Praying on vacation

How to make your vacation time truly refreshing

Marlene Kropf

The idea of a "vacation with a purpose" has become more popular recently. Some people deliberately include a stint of service at a homeless shelter or a few days pounding nails at a Habitat for Humanity house as part of their yearly vacation. I applaud this effort to give God a portion of our leisure time.

Perhaps one could push the idea of a purposeful vacation even further. Because many of us struggle to find time for unhurried prayer in the midst of our ordinary routines, how about spending a few days of our annual vacation on retreat? Many retreat centers in North America welcome guests and provide spacious facilities for individuals, couples or families to spend time in prayer and reflection.

Discovering a new vacation destination: One spring my husband and I traveled south to enjoy warmer temperatures and flowering landscapes. For many years we had wanted to visit Gethsemani Abbey, a Cistercian (Trappist) monastery—south of Louisville, Ky.—where Thomas Merton had resided as a hermit during the last years of his life. A phone call or two put us in touch with a retreat center near the Abbey (we had discovered that couples are not allowed to stay together at the monastery), and we made our reservations. Later we enjoyed several quiet, restful days with ample time for prayer and solitude, walks in the fields and woods, simple but tasty meals prepared for us at the retreat center and daily worship with the monks at Gethsemani in one of the most austere but strikingly beautiful chapels we had ever seen.

Other years we enjoyed the generous hospitality and serene setting of other retreat centers: a Trappist abbey on a fir-covered hillside in Oregon, a Benedictine priory among palm trees and orange groves beside a lake in Florida, and a Benedictine monastery on the edge of the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont. In all these places we were invited to join the resident community at its daily prayer services. We were also free to wander on the grounds or find places for solitary prayer. In some cases, meals were served in silence; at other places, conversation was welcomed.

My husband and I found that a rhythm of solitude and companionship suited us best. We agreed to spend certain hours of each day alone; we also spent some time each day walking and talking together about our experiences.

The beautiful natural surroundings and restful silence of retreat centers are even more appealing to us than popular vacation spots. We arrive home feeling truly refreshed—in touch with God and with each other. What's more, the typical costs of a stay at a retreat center are much more modest than most tourist accommodations.

Where can information about retreat centers be found? Several good directories provide information about North American retreat centers. Jack and Marcia Kelly have compiled a directory called *Sanctuaries—the Complete United States: A Guide to Lodgings in Monasteries, Abbeys and Retreats* (Bell Tower, 1996). As they visited retreat centers, they also collected recipes from which Marcia Kelly eventually produced a marvelous cookbook, *Heavenly Feasts: Memorable Meals from Monasteries, Abbeys and Retreats* (Bell Tower, 1996).

Another useful directory is *A Guide to Monastic Guest Houses* by Robert J. Regalbuto (Morehouse Publishing, 1992). Information includes a description of accommodations, meals, costs, nearby points of interest and directions for reaching the guesthouses (some of which are located in out-of-the-way places).

If you've never spent time alone on a retreat, it can be helpful to request guidance. Most retreat centers have spiritual directors on staff who will meet with guests and provide suggestions for structuring their time and even a focus for reflection. Also available are guides for designing your own retreat. *A Guide to Prayer for All God's People* by Reuben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck (Upper Room, 1990) provides models for personal retreats. *Renewing Your Soul: A Guided Retreat for the Sabbath and Other Days of Rest* by David A. Cooper (HarperSanFrancisco, 1995) offers wisdom and resources from the Jewish tradition.

What if a visit to a retreat center is not possible? Even if your vacation plans don't include a stop at a retreat center, you can still enjoy special times for prayer. Simply stopping at an open church for a half-hour of silence and reflection can create a space for renewed awareness of God's presence and call. Another option that is often possible in the more leisurely schedule of a vacation is to set aside longer times for morning and evening prayer. A wonderful resource that includes daily prayers from the Celtic tradition is *A Wee Worship Book* by the Wild Goose Worship Group (Iona Community), available from GIA Publications (1-800-GIA-1358).

An idea for Christmas gifts: If your funds are scarce, put a retreat stay on your Christmas list. If someone on your list is in need of renewal, arrange for a gift certificate to a nearby retreat center. Time for prayer can be the most wonderful gift of all.

BOOKS FOR RETREATS

- *Sanctuaries—the Complete United States: A Guide to Lodgings in Monasteries, Abbeys and Retreats* by Jack and Marcia Kelly
- *A Guide to Monastic Guest Houses* by Robert J. Regalbuto
- *A Guide to Prayer for All God's People* by Reuben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck
- *Renewing Your Soul: A Guided Retreat for the Sabbath and Other Days of Rest* by David A. Cooper

MCs give cautious nod to merger proposals

Kalona, Iowa—While a major Midwest spring snowstorm blew outside during most of the Mennonite Church General Board (MCGB) meeting at Iowa Mennonite School April 10-12, inside members struggled to keep from getting buried under a myriad of details related to merging the Mennonite Church (MC) with the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC).

Before them was a 19-page report from the Integration Committee (IC) outlining possible structures for the new denomination. After almost four hours of discussion, including questions, counsel and cautions, board members agreed to the directions set by the IC proposal "in principle."

Decision on a name came easiest. With almost no discussion, MCGB members agreed that "Mennonite Church" should be the name of the new denomination. "Of course, that's easy for us to say," one member quipped afterward, "since this is already our name."

"But this must be a new name for you too," said GC general secretary James Schrag, attending the sessions as a guest. "This will be a new denomination with a new meaning to the name."

Timetable for a new board: Somewhat more difficult to decide was how soon the board should dissolve itself in favor of one combined General Board. While the IC proposal calls for this to happen by 1999, several members wondered if this was possible if other details of the structure weren't in place.

"Can we fudge '1999' with some wording like 'whenever we are ready'?" asked MC moderator Owen Burkholder.

"That seems to me like we're having wedding jitters," said Phil Bergey of Franconia Conference.

What raised the most apprehension was the proposal to divide the new church into four regions—Canada, U.S. West, U.S. Central and U.S. East.

John C. Murray, IC co-chair, said the goal of structuring around regions was to make it possible for the new denomination "to communicate with many more people. Because we will be getting larger, we need some way for voices to be heard in a smaller setting," he said.

Duane Oswald of Pacific Southwest Conference said, "I have a great deal of trouble with that happening in one region that takes in everything west of the Mississippi."

Florence Duley of Northwest Conference wondered why the regions had to be geographical. "Couldn't they rather be set up on the basis of relationships?" she asked.

The discussion on regions ended with board members asking the IC to process the idea with MC area conferences and GC area conferences as soon as possible.

Cost and interest: MCGB gave a positive nod to the idea for a general assembly in the new denomination meeting every three years. But they asked the IC to explore the costs of this proposal.

Phyllis Litwiller of Iowa-Nebraska had calculated that proposed representation of one delegate per 100 members would have 46 coming from her conference to the new general assembly. "That has serious financial implications," she said. "Frankly, I wonder if we could find enough people willing and able to fill the slots."

> **"It seems to me like we're having wedding jitters."**
>
> *Phil Bergey*

The board also asked the IC to continue monitoring work on a new publication for the integrated church.

Underlying the discussion and action was the knowledge that the GC General Board had already approved the integration proposals in a session a month earlier. MCGB agreed that all its future meetings should be held at the same time as the GCGB to facilitate integration discussions and action.

The structure proposals will next go to a special GC session in Winnipeg in early July and the biennial MC General Assembly in Orlando later the same month. *J. Lorne Peachey*

Inside the news

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Planned giving director resigns / p. 17

Apartheid's victims seek reconciliation / p. 18

Walton (Kan.) Mennonite Church closed April 27 after its final service.

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The Mennonite Central Committee World Wide Web site was selected for a Hot Site Award in the March 17 issue of *USA Today*. Hot Sites are selected based on content and appearance. The MCC web site address is http://www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc/. (*John Longhurst*)

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Billy Caldwell, a senior at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University, was killed in a drive-by shooting in Pomona, Calif., on March 25, along with his uncle, a coach at a local middle school. Caldwell was visiting family during the Easter break. The university held a memorial service for Caldwell April 1.

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Lemuel So, pastor of the Love Truth Chinese Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, and Caleb Tsai, pastor of Trinity Chinese/Taiwanese Mennonite Church, Buena Park, Calif., will share the award for best entry in a Schowalter Foundation program that encourages Chinese Mennonites to write and preach on Mennonite/Anabaptist themes. Entries were evaluated based on biblical content and exposition along with connection to Mennonite faith and history. (*Hugh Sprunger*)

Allen Carden, former president of Spring Arbor (Mich.) College, has been selected as the seventh president of Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College. Carden will begin his duties July 1, succeeding Richard Kriegbaum.

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When Tim Bentch, mission associate in Hungary with the Commission on Overseas Mission, participated in a festival performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with the Timisoara Opera in Iasi, Romania, last October, he discovered that several of his fellow musicians were Christians; one was even a Mennonite from Ohio. Bentch is now singing with the Debrecen Opera in Hungary, rehearsing Verdi's *Falstaff* and building relationships with his colleagues. Bentch and Lorri, his wife, spent 10 days in Moscow with Esther Augsburger, a Mennonite artist from Washington, hosting a seminar for Christian artists and musicians and planning for an artists' gathering to be held in Lithuania this August. (*COMmunicator*)

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Several faculty appointments were made at the spring meeting of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary board, March 14-15 in Elkhart, Ind. Marlene Kropf, currently adjunct faculty, has been appointed half-time assistant professor in spiritual formation and worship. David Tripp, pastor of United Methodist Church in Wolcottville, Ind., and David Schrader, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church, Elkhart, were appointed to adjunct faculty positions and Leroy Saner was reappointed to another three-year term as associate director of development. Willard M. Swartley, AMBS dean, shared the good news of another increase in enrollment for second semester. Current enrollment shows 28 percent more students than second semester a year ago. The board expressed its affirmation and appreciation to John Friesen, Winnipeg, former board chair who resigned for health reasons, and welcomed Alvin Isaacs, Inglewood, Calif., as a new board member. (*Mary E. Klassen*)

MCC tries to help avert famine in North Korea

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Half a bowl of rice. That's the rationed daily amount of food for North Koreans. People supplement this by foraging for leaves, roots and wild plants.

Rick Fee (MCC)

Edge of starvation: *North Koreans line up to receive their rations—now only 3.5 ounces/100 grams of rice per person per day.*

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is joining with Caritas, a Roman Catholic relief agency, and other groups to send emergency food shipments to North Korea to try to stave off the famine that seems imminent. Some governments, including those of the United States and Canada, have also contributed aid, although only a fraction of what is needed.

MCC provided $150,000 U.S./ $200,000 Cdn. to purchase corn and rice from Vietnam and is shipping 115,200 cans of beef from its warehouses in Kansas and Pennsylvania (see sidebar on page 15).

"In 1995 and 1996, summer floods destroyed 890,000 acres of crop land," says Ann Martin, director of MCC's East Asia programs.

Martin notes the food crisis is also due to the North Korean government's agricultural policies. "Observers report that annual grain production has been declining for the past 13 years but that people have somehow managed to cope with shortages until the recent floods," she says.

Regardless of the difficult political situation, "MCC is committed to feeding hungry people wherever they are, including in North Korea," says Martin.

MCC's food aid will be distributed by Caritas with help from the World Food Program, a United Nations agency. MCC has no workers in North Korea.

The coming months will be especially hungry ones, since the next harvest will not be ready until October. People are already trying to sell their household items to buy food.

Ten months of advocacy by MCC Canada, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) and other Canadian church groups paid off when Canada agreed to let the agencies use government money to help hungry people in North Korea.

The decision will allow the CFGB to use $3.6 million Cdn. allocated to it by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to ship 15,000 metric tons of grain to North Korea. Until now the CFGB could not use CIDA money for that country since it is on the list of countries ineligible for aid from Canada.

MCC's efforts included a March 6 letter from MCC Canada executive director Marv Frey to senior government officials. In the letter he argued that the government should let the agencies use the money because of the growing food needs in North Korea, and because humanitarian responses can help open doors of understanding between North Korea, an exceptionally closed and controlled society, and the West. He also pointed out that the needs of hungry people should take precedence over Canadian policy needs.

"We were initially told by government officials that North Korea was a low priority for them," says Frey, adding that "advocacy by church groups certainly helped change the government's mind."

U.S. farmers can support the famine response by selling commodities on MCC's behalf, instructing that proceeds be designated for North Korea and sent to MCC at P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501. Canadian farmers can donate grain to the MCC account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Financial contributions to MCC's relief efforts for North Korea should be designated "North Korea Hunger Appeal, #712-2015," and mailed to the nearest MCC office. *John Longhurst, Canada; MCC U.S. staff*

Praying food to North Korea

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—The events of April 1 were no joke for Kevin King.

As Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) material resources director, King's task on that Tuesday was to find a way to move 115,200 cans of beef from Pennsylvania and Kansas to North Korea.

After a long Easter weekend, King had returned to the office to find his desk piled with paperwork. A phone conversation with a United Nations official made it clear what he needed to work on first. On a recent visit to North Korea, the official had observed hungry people scavenging corn cobs and pine bark to supplement their small rice ration.

King's next phone call was to "Joe," a freight forwarder in New Jersey. Joe reported a ship would sail directly from Texas to North Korea the following week. There would be room for the MCC meat, Joe said, if MCC could obtain all the clearances and get the meat to the harbor on time.

At that point, King said, "Lord, if you want this to work, you'll have to make it happen because it's not humanly possible."

As the day unfolded, a youth group could help prepare the cans of meat for shipping. A trucking company agreed to haul the meat to Texas. "Tom," a Washington official, knew about Mennonites—he attended their "quilt sales" and enjoyed their cheese—and was willing to expedite the paperwork.

The export office in Harrisburg, Pa., had one last copy of the six-page form needed. An official happened to live near King and would bring it home from work. A staffperson overheard a phone conversation about how to get the completed form to Washington. He was taking visiting relatives there the next morning and offered to hand-deliver the document.

The saga continued throughout the week. Tom called to say MCC's shipping license needed approval from both the U.S. State Department and the Department of Defense. Joe reported that the ship would load three days early. MCC's meat could not be loaded until the approvals came through.

Finally Tom called with the news that MCC's request to ship the meat had been approved. A process that normally takes 30 days had been completed in 4 1/2. "There must have been a lot of prayers," said Tom.

Panicky MCC staff called from Kansas. One truck had not arrived to pick up the meat. King found a trucker willing to make the overnight trip but knew it would probably make it to the harbor too late.

Then it rained in Texas, and dock workers had to wait to load the ship. "It's a good thing God controls the weather, too," said a relieved King.

The ship set sail from Texas on April 15, carrying the 100 tons of MCC meat and other donations from the United Nations and church groups. It is set to arrive in Nampo, North Korea, this month.

King can't resist adding that "God's way" also saved money. The shipment cost only 17 cents a can, compared to the usual 22 cents.
Pearl Sensenig

MDS challenged by 'unnatural' disasters

Columbus, Miss. (MDS)—In 1996, Mennonite Disaster Service focused more energy than usual on human-caused disasters—a challenge to the traditional MDS mandate.

More than 480 MDSers from the United States and Canada converged on Columbus for the Feb. 7-8 all-unit meeting—a time of fellowship and business reminiscent of a family reunion.

This year the "MDS family" included brothers and sisters from Mount Zoar Baptist Church, the Boligee, Ala., church MDS rebuilt after it was burned in January 1996. Church members attended an MDS banquet, and on Feb. 9 more than 250 MDSers drove two hours to Boligee for Sunday worship and a fellowship meal at the new church building.

As the MDS group reviewed its 1996

Seventeen employees of the Church of the Brethren General Board in Elgin, Ill., were told March 12 that their positions would be terminated as of July 18, due to downsizing and adoption of a new structure. These include Kermon Thomasson, editor of *Messenger* since 1977.

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The Associated Press reports that two Amish brothers are willing to risk being shot at or jailed rather than wear the "worldly" color orange. Samuel and Joas Bontrager of Kenton, Ohio, recently lost their bid to overturn a court ruling that says they must abide by state law and wear bright orange clothing while hunting, even on their own property. The brothers are members of the Swartzendruber Amish. (*The Mountain Eagle*)

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The second annual Jimmy Carter Old Timers Reunion Blitz took place at El Mirage, Ariz., in early March. A group of retirees, including several Mennonites, who have worked together as volunteers in various locations across the United States, have decided to hold "reunion blitzes" where they meet in a designated place every year to participate in a service project. This year, they helped build two houses from the ground up, working with Maricopa County Habitat for Humanity. (*Inez Unruh*)

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Despite hindrances from cold, snowy weather, Peace Mennonite Community Church of Aurora, Colo., is nearing completion of its first worship facility after 10 years of meeting in a senior citizens' center. The congregation's building budget called for $85,000 in volunteer labor. Groups and individuals have come from Mennonite churches in Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. Denver-area Mennonite pastors and spouses participated in a work day. Volunteers are still needed and welcome. Call Leonard Wiebe, pastor, at (303) 750-7607 or (303) 341-6841. (*Dennis Becker*)

Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services of Wichita, Kan., and the Wichita affiliate of Habitat for Humanity, formal partners since 1990, may be going their separate ways. Habitat, which joined Mennonite Housing to build 20 houses in Wichita in the summer of 1995, their biggest joint achievement to date, has decided not to participate in the planned "mini-blitz" to build five houses in Wichita this spring. Habitat may also move its offices out of the Mennonite Housing facility. A professional mediator has been called at least once to try and deal with tensions between the two boards, which hold regular joint meetings. (*Wichita Eagle*)

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In 1906, Mennonite Board of Missions, based in Elkhart, Ind., opened the Mennonite Sanitarium in La Junta, Colo., for people suffering from tuberculosis. Fourteen years later, MBM took over La Junta's city hospital, and Mennonite Hospital began operation, combining the work of the sanitarium with broader health-care services. Since then, MBM has established a number of hospitals around the United States in underserved communities. Mennonite Hospital was renamed La Junta Medical Center in 1970 and Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center in the late 1980s. Last summer, MBM officials told community representatives that ownership of AVRMC should reside within the community that the facility serves. Community leaders and MBM representatives announced recently that they have reached a tentative agreement, effective on or before June 1, 1998, by which all existing hospital assets will transfer to a new, community-based not-for-profit corporation. "As MBM works with the communities in the Arkansas Valley to develop a vision for transfer of ownership and administration of the La Junta hospital, it brings to a conclusion an important chapter in [MBM] history," says MBM president Stanley W. Green.

activities, it became clear that the year had held fewer than average natural disasters, such as tornadoes, hurricanes and floods. Recent MDS work has focused on helping people affected by "unnatural disasters," including the rash of church burnings in the U.S. South and chronic housing problems that plague poverty-stricken areas. MDS volunteers are currently working in affordable housing programs in Brownsville, Texas, New Orleans and Miami.

Pearl Sensenig

In memory: *Amos Miller of Goshen, Ind., Conservative Conference representative on the Mennonite Disaster Service board, was an early advocate for MDS involvement with Mount Zoar Baptist Church in Boligee, Ala. The African-American congregation's building burned in January 1996, likely as a result of arson. On paper ripped from a notebook, Mount Zoar members drew their "dream church." Miller took the sketch, transformed it into a blueprint and headed up construction plans. It was the last MDS project in which he participated. In September 1996, just weeks after the church was dedicated, Miller died of a heart attack. On Feb. 9, MDSers, Mount Zoar members and Amos' widow, Wilma Miller (above) celebrated Miller's life and contribution by planting a dogwood tree in front of the church.*

"Are we stretching the MDS mandate when we get involved in human-caused disasters?" asked MDS executive coordinator Lowell Detweiler at an afternoon workshop. Most participants responded by expressing support for this type of MDS activity.

"We're in a time when the government is putting fewer resources into affordable housing," noted one man. "What kind of disaster is this, and what is the challenge for the church?"

Some, however, stressed that MDS' main concern must be natural disaster response, and that the organization should respond to other needs only if it doesn't interfere with its ability to respond quickly when natural disasters occur.

MDS must "put emergencies first," said one person. "If a tornado goes through and people have no houses at all, we should help them first."

Detweiler explained that MDS generally puts a time limit on helping out in nonemergency situations. The Mount Zoar church, for example, was rebuilt in about three months. This way MDS can be prepared to shift quickly if natural disasters strike.

MDS has always emphasized, through training for volunteers, the importance of preparing for disaster response. But in situations of unnatural disasters, a different kind of preparation may be needed.

Oppression, racism and poverty often cause these human tragedies. Working in these settings frequently brings MDSers into contact with unfamiliar cultures and ways of life. Before the mostly white youth groups traveled to Alabama to work on the African-American church, for example, MDS provided racism awareness training.

In another workshop, Sally Jacober, coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee's New Orleans program, cautioned MDSers not to make assumptions about the people they meet based on their own life experiences.

"People of color face obstacles we don't understand," said Jacober.

One workshop participant pointed out that MDSers are, by nature, often "doers," and that in unnatural disasters, MDSers will need to view relationships developed as just as important as physical structures constructed.

As the meeting ended, it was obvious that whether MDS volunteers mend fences damaged by prairie fires in Montana or tear down "fences" that separate blacks and whites by rebuilding an African-American church, they remain dedicated to following their mission statement: to "care for those in need in the name of Christ." *Pearl Sensenig*

Civil war reaches Zaire Mennonites

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—As Zairian rebels advance on Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, there are reports of looting affecting Zairian Mennonites.

On April 13, the rebels, known as Alliance troops, officially began their offensive on Kinshasa. The advance toward Kinshasa leads through areas where many Zairian Mennonites live. Kananga, Tshikapa and Kikwit—towns with Zairian Mennonite church offices—are on the route to Kinshasa.

In an April 16 e-mail message to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) headquarters here, Ann and Bruce Campbell-Janz reported they had heard of some looting.

The couple, who direct MCC's Zaire programs from Kinshasa, heard the following news through ham radio connections:

- In Tshikapa, two houses owned by the Mennonite Church of Zaire (CMZa) were looted.
- CMZa leaders visiting churches in Kasai Occidental province disabled their vehicle when they learned soldiers were in the area. However, retreating soldiers discovered and stole the vehicle, leaving the pastors to walk more than 19 miles to a CMZa church.
- In Kalonda, a CMZa-managed hospital was looted. The extent of the damage was not yet known in Kinshasa. It was also not clear that this incident was related to the current war.

Since October 1996, Zairian troops have lost about one-third of Zaire to the Alliance. In many places, defeated troops have looted homes and farms as they retreated.

People continue to hope looting might be minimal in Mennonite areas as most troops appear to be trying to get to Kinshasa as quickly as possible. Terry Sawatsky, co-director of MCC Africa programs, said most people do not fear Alliance troops. He predicted little displacement of local people.

Alliance sources say their troops are within 90 miles of Kinshasa. Sawatsky says it seems more likely troops are about 300 miles east of Kinshasa.

MCC worker Mike Salomons, who lives in Kahemba, southeast of Kinshasa, was advised to go to the capital by local partners, who recommended that the Campbell-Janz couple and Salomons stay together in the event evacuation becomes necessary.

MCC workers Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya are in Bukavu, Zaire, which was captured by the Alliance in October 1996. The war has moved considerably further west and the couple is currently working with local partners at reconstruction and distribution of medicine and food.

Mission workers to stay for now

The Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church works in Africa through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. In Zaire under AIMM are COM workers Rick and Marilyn Derksen, along with their children: Karina, Jeremiah and Erica.

Rick Derksen reports that in Tshikapa, where the Mennonite Church in Zaire (CMZa) has its headquarters, Zairian government soldiers retreating from rebel, or Alliance, offensives, looted and terrorized the people. In addition, the CMZa station at Kalonda was looted twice in two weeks.

Derksen says that the truck referred to in the MCC article, at left, was later returned to Mennonite church representatives in Kinshasa but in need of major repairs and with no way to get it back to Tshikapa, where it is needed.

Derksens and the other AIMM couple now in Zaire, Richard and Marilyn Steiner of the Evangelical Mennonite Church, in consultation with Zairian church partners, have indicated that they will stay in Zaire for the time being.

Planned giving director resigns

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Gary Franz, director of planned giving for the General Conference Mennonite Church, has announced his resignation.

Franz has served in the position since July 1988. In 1970-71, he worked for the General Conference as director of the Poverty Fund under the Board of Christian Service.

Franz's resignation becomes effective Aug. 15, although he will reduce his current workload to half-time beginning immediately.

Franz plans to re-enter the business world in the area of real estate and real estate development.

"My nine years at General Conference have been a rewarding and satisfying experience," says Franz. "I am very happy that I was able to have a part in helping the God-given mission of General Conference be carried forward. My prayer is for God to continue to bless the ongoing work and the integration plans that the GCMC is now undertaking."

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Kathleen Cleland Moyer, Kitchener, Ont., a playwright and conflict resolution facilitator, is the recipient of the ninth annual award from the Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund. The fund, established after Epp's death in 1986, gives financial assistance for research and writing projects in keeping with the concerns of Frank Epp, a historian and church leader with particular interest in history of the Mennonites and other minorities and peacemaking. Moyer will use the $2,500 Cdn. award to support a drama project aimed at French- and English-speaking secondary school students. Moyer writes plays for and about young people in order to promote peace and relationship-building. For information about the Epp Fund, write Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L3G6.

On March 12, Sister Nirmala, 63, of the Missionaries of Charity was elected successor to Mother Teresa. Sister Nirmala was born into an ethnic Nepali family in the northern Indian state of Bihar. A member of the Hindu Brahmin—priestly—caste, she was educated as a lawyer, then converted to Catholicism at age 24 and joined the Missionaries of Charity. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Singers and songwriters are invited to contribute to a CD to support Christian development work in Haiti and to inspire Christians to seek justice. The recording is a joint effort of Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and Mennonite Central Committee. Musicians in the genre of contemporary folk or alternative music and committed to social justice should send demo tapes or DAT recordings to Have You Heard? c/o Rick Unruh, 198 Chalmers Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 0E8.

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***An Act of Conscience*, a 90-minute documentary film that aired on Cinemax in April, tells the story of Randy Kehler and Betsy Corner, war-tax resisters from Colrain, Mass., whose home was seized by the IRS. The film chronicles the series of events that took place over a five-year period as the couple nonviolently resisted the seizure of their home and were joined in the struggle by hundreds of community activists from across the United State in what became one of the longest sustained pacifist actions in recent history. *An Act of Conscience* was one of only 16 documentary films out of 200 aired at the Sundance Film Festival. For information on distribution, contact Turning Tide Productions, P.O. Box 864, Wendell, MA 01379; (508) 544-8313.**

Apartheid's victims seek reconciliation

Johannesburg (MCC)—During the late 1980s, three white South African security police went undercover in the township of Mamelodi, near Pretoria, in order to weed out youth activists involved in opposition movements against the white apartheid government.

The police told a group of young men that they were recruiting for a soccer team, then allegedly murdered them enroute to a soccer camp.

Ten years later, in a new South Africa, the parents, relatives and friends of those youths are asking for the truth. Who committed this crime and why?

Mark Beach

A measure of peace: *The Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre mediation team in Roodeport, South Africa, includes, from left, Khosana Tladi, Carl Stauffer, Ouma Maswabi, Bongani Mtshali and Nombulelo (Joyce) Khumalo.*

The answers to those questions and a multitude of others concerning political violence under apartheid are being painfully revealed through the efforts of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The task of the TRC, established by the South African parliament in the hope of bringing national healing and reconciliation, is to find the truth about the past.

But simply uncovering the truth may not be enough. While the TRC has a limited lifespan, the commission is establishing programs that will help the survivors, victims and offenders find a measure of peace. One program, Survivor-Offender Mediation (SOM), intends to "put a face on the past" through face-to-face mediation.

SOM was initiated by Mennonite Central Committee worker Carl Stauffer of the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (founded in 1948 as an ecumenical witness against apartheid) and representatives of 21 other participating groups. It aims to bring together survivors and offenders of apartheid's carnage. Much like victim/offender reconciliation program (VORP) methods used in North America, SOM allows for an impartial mediator to help survivor and offender come to a resolution together.

SOM carries with it an important component of VORP: restorative justice—examining the harm done to a person and the resulting needs. Like VORP, SOM also seeks ways to make things right for the victim and places obligations on the offender to work toward that end.

"Understanding comes for both sides through various interactions, such as group meetings where entire communities come together to work through the pain," Stauffer says. Before coming to South Africa in 1994, Stauffer directed Capital Area VORP in Richmond, Va.

Stauffer wants to be careful that the process includes traditional African customs of conflict resolution, healing and reparations. "We don't want to prescribe to South Africans," he says. "Good conflict intervention has the interveners in the background."

Traditional African mediation tends to be communal and consensus building. "There is a restorative effort utilized in dealing with those who get out of line," Stauffer says of some African techniques. "But there is also a great willingness to forgive."

Whether the Mamelodi youths' families will forgive is yet to be seen. They have been meeting together for more than a year and are now ready to move the process forward.

As Stauffer and his colleagues work with the case, their first task will be to bring both parties together. The survivors are ready. As for the former police officers, one has stated his remorse, another refuses to meet with the families and the third says he was only doing what the government asked him to do at the time.

"We realize the complexity of it," Stauffer says. "But we think that justice will come full circle in the future."
Mark Beach

Record

COM—Commission on Overseas Mission

DEATHS

Ilunga

Mukanza Ilunga, Kinshasa, Zaire, died March 20 after a brief illness. He was 54. He was a pastor, had served as vice president of the Zaire Mennonite Church, served on Mennonite World Conference's International Mennonite Peace Committee, and worked for various Christian development organizations.

John F. Schmidt, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., died April 19 at age 87. He was pastor at Buhler (Kan.) Church 1939-1941, and directed Civilian Public Service camps in Marietta, Ohio, and Fort Collins, Colo., 1941-43. He taught speech and journalism at Bethel College, North Newton, was curator at Kauffman Museum and assistant editor of *Mennonite Life*. He was the first archivist at Bethel College's Mennonite Library and Archives, and set up the archives for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Shelly

Ward Shelly died March 31 at age 83. He served as pastor at Springfield Church, Quakertown, Pa., 1939-1951; Bethel Church, Perkasie, Pa., 1942-1951; Saucon Church, Coopersburg, Pa., 1944-1951; Bethel Church, Lancaster, Pa., 1951-1964; Calvary Church, Washington, Ill., 1965-1979. He also served as interim pastor at Bethesda Church, Henderson, Neb., 1979-1982, and at Bethel Church, Fortuna, Mo., and First Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

MINISTERS

Curt Bueckert has resigned as youth pastor of Zoar Church, Langham, Sask., effective June 15.

Patty Jo Friesen and **Patrick Preheim** will be pastors at Faith Church, Minneapolis, beginning in July.

Leo Hartshorn is pastor at Bethel Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Arlee Johnson will be pastor at Herold Church, Bessie, Okla. , beginning June 1.

John Voth is ending as pastor at Eden Church, Inola, Okla., May 25. He is retiring early due to medical reasons.

Duane Yoder is ending as pastor at Hesston (Kan.) Inter-Mennonite Fellowship the end of June. He will be pastor at Bay Shore Church, Sarasota, Fla.

WORKERS

M.J. Assis

N. Assis

Mary Jane and **Nilson Assis**, Eden Church, Schwenksville, Pa., have completed COM terms in Brazil, where they were involved in evangelism and leadership development.

Lowell Detweiler will be ending as coordinator for Mennonite Disaster Service in 1998.

Frank and **Nettie Dyck**, Calgary, are COM mission associates in Zaporozhye, Ukraine.

Bonnie Friesen, Elim Church, Grunthal, Man., is a COM mission associate in Zaporozhye, Ukraine.

Anne and **Jake Harms**, Douglas Church, Winnipeg, have completed their COM terms in Mexico. Jake served as interim pastor for the Blumenau Church near Cuauhtemoc.

Peter and **Sue Kehler**, Abbotsford, B.C., have completed their COM work in Zaporozhye, Ukraine.

Earl Sears will be director of Offender Victim Ministries in Newton, Kan., beginning Aug. 18.

Moving?

Let us know six weeks ahead.

Jean Broadfoot, a well-known Winnipeg musician and piano instructor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, counts among her former students pianist Emanuel Ax, one of the most sought after performers in North America. Ax will play a recital in Broadfoot's honor May 23 in Winnipeg, with proceeds going to establish the Jean Broadfoot Piano scholarship for CMBC piano majors. Call CMBC, (204) 888-6781.

• • •

When John D. Waltner, Hesston, Kan., encouraged students in his government class at Hesston High School to become involved in public issues, he didn't foresee the results. Senior Christopher Friesen, 18, took the challenge and entered the race for mayor of Hesston—opposing Waltner, the incumbent, and one other candidate. Waltner, a Democrat, got 59 percent of the vote and Friesen, a Republican, got 31 percent in the primary election. The *Today Show* interviewed Waltner and Friesen, who are Mennonites, but Friesen declined an invitation to appear on the *David Letterman Show*. Waltner maintained his office in the April 1 general election. (*Gospel Herald*)

• • •

***The Christian Century* reports that a black actor who was hired to play the role of Jesus in a Passion play in Union City, N.J., received death threats. Desi Arnaz Giles, who acted the part of Jesus in the play March 2, said he would continue to play the role despite the threats. Giles alternated the part with a white actor. The theater's artistic director, Eric Hafen, said he received a call from a woman who asked, "When is the white actor playing, because I don't want to see the black thing." Hafen said he expected some phone calls but was surprised by such "blatant racism." Later, however, Hafen reported that negative comments had stopped and positive phone calls, wired messages and letters were coming in daily from across the country, England and South America. (*Gospel Herald, National Catholic Reporter*)**

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Mennonite Disaster Service
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Resumes will be accepted through June 30, 1997

The MDS Executive Coordinator provides leadership to board and staff, oversees responses to major disasters in cooperation with regional and unit MDS leaders, and administers the binational MDS office and budget, among other duties. Qualifications include strong administrative skills, experience with MDS program and constituency, willingness to travel, and experience working with volunteer groups. College degree and/or church organization experience preferable.

Direct inquiries to:
Norman Shenk, Chair, Search Committee
P.O. Box 628, Salunga, PA 17538
e-mail: nnjshenk@aol.com

Faith & Life Press,
publisher for the General Conference Mennonite Church, invites applications for the position of

editorial director

We seek an individual to provide editorial services and oversight for the development and production of Faith & Life Press products. This person will manage the Editorial Division, serve on Management Team and report to the director of operations. Responsibilities include new product development; recruiting authors, illustrators and manuscripts; editing, and supervision of staff. Qualifications and desired skills include editorial experience, theological education, college degree with background in Christian education, literature, grammar, humanities and communications.

Applications accepted until position is filled.
Starting date is July 15, 1997.

Address inquiries and resumes to:
Dennis M. Good, Director of Operations
Faith & Life Press
P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114-0347
(316) 283-5100; fax **(316) 283-0454**
e-mail **dennisg@gcmc.org**

Director of pastoral care/chaplain sought for **Prairie View**, a regional behavioral and mental health system established in 1954 by the Mennonite churches and guided by a strong tradition of Christian caring. M.Div., 2 units CPE, denominational endorsement/ordination with MSW or master's clinical degree and experience in mental health and church ministry desired. Experience in crisis ministry helpful. Position to develop pastoral and congregational relationships regarding behavioral and mental health issues, direct pastoral care to patients and families, plan spiritual programming and provide pastoral care for staff.

Submit resume to **Yvonne Sieber, Vice President Human Resources, Prairie View, Inc., Box 467, Newton, KS 67114-0467;** fax **(316) 284-6491;** e-mail **yms@pvi.org**. EOE

Education: Bluffton College announces a full-time, interim position in **education** for 1997-98. Rank dependent on qualifications. Master's considered; doctorate preferred. The successful candidate will hold an advanced degree in elementary education; evidence of effective teaching crucial and graduate level teaching preferred. Responsibilities include teaching graduate and undergraduate education courses in foundation, curriculum methods, classroom management and educational research as well as placement and supervision of student teachers. Consideration of applications will begin immediately and continue until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.

Send letter of interest, resume or vita, three letters of reference, and unofficial transcripts to **Amy Tabler, Assistant to the VP and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.** EOE

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following positions open for the 1997-98 school year: **English instructor; social studies/Bible instructor; director of food services; orchestra/band director** (25 percent).

Send resumes or inquiries to **Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Hopi Mission School is seeking a **school administrator** to assume duties beginning July 1997. The applicant should have a bachelor's degree with teaching/administrative experience and missionary awareness. Hopi Mission School is located in northern Arizona on the Hopi Reservation. The school serves approximately 50 students in grades K-6. The school is affiliated with the Mennonites and the American Baptists.

Application/resume should be sent to **Hopi Mission School, P.O. Box 39, Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039; (520) 734-2453.**

First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., seeks a full-time **associate pastor**. Ministry will focus on young adults and young families, evangelism and outreach, and Christian education.

Reply to **Don Schmidt, Search Committee Chair, First Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 291, Newton, KS 67114.**

Academia Menonita (PK-12) has an open position for **school director**. Requirements: M.A. or Ph.D. in educational administration, minimum of five years administrative experience in education.

If interested, contact **Francie Nassar-Fischle** at **(787) 783-1295**, fax **(787) 783-1280**, or **Academia Menonita, 1751 Asomante St., Summit Hills, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00920.**

Quakertown Christian School has an open position for a full-time **director of development**. Opportunity for creative person with people skills.

Send resume to **Mark Swartley, 143 Rocky Ridge Road, Quakertown, PA 18951.**

Rosthern Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Sask., invites applications for a full-time **youth pastor**. The position requires a mature, enthusiastic person who indicates a strong Christian faith and who can relate to youth in the church and community. Bible college graduate preferred.

Resumes should be mailed **by June 1** to the **Search Committee, Box 519, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0.**

Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a **science/Bible instructor**. Applicant must have coaching experience. Teaching responsibilities include: physical science, general biology, advanced biology, physics, chemistry and one Bible class. Salary range: $19,200-$29,300 (competitive with most South Dakota public schools). Coaching responsibilities: varsity girls basketball, co-ed track and possibly assistant boys basketball.

Send resume to **Freeman Academy, Attn. Larry Horner, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029.**

The anticipated integrated **Women's Organization of the WMSC/WM** invites applications for the half-time position of **editor**. Position to begin mid-August 1997. Responsibilities to include developing and publishing a bimonthly periodical and overseeing tasks involved in publishing an annual Bible study guide. Job description is available from Women's Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church, 421 S. Second St., Suite 600, Elkhart, IN 46516-3243, (219) 294-7131; or Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, 722 Main St., P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, (316) 283-5100.

Applications should be sent by **June 16** to **Elizabeth Klassen, Search Committee Chair, 237 Becker St., Kitchener, ON N2B 1X8.**

Teaching positions, New Danville Mennonite School, 393 Long Lane, Lancaster, PA 17603. Openings for special education, fifth grade and half-time kindergarten teachers.

Contact **Carl A. Hess, (717) 872-2506.**

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Reviews

FILMS

LIVING INSIDE THE HEART

Sling Blade, *written and directed by Billy Bob Thornton, produced by Brandon Rosser and David L. Bushell, rated R*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

Karl Childers (Billy Bob Thornton), born mildly mentally retarded, was left to raise himself in a shed behind the house of his parents, who considered him God's curse. At about age 12, Karl caught his mother having sex with the town bully and killed them both with a knife called a sling blade. The movie opens 25 years later, when Karl, now considered rehabilitated, is released from the state hospital where he was confined after the murders.

Thanks to the efforts of the hospital director, Karl gets a job as a small-engine mechanic in a small Arkansas town. He meets a young boy, Frank Wheatley (Lucas Black), who does not seem to notice Karl's odd appearance. "I like the way he talks," Frank tells his widowed mother, Linda (Natalie Canerday). Frank and Karl become best friends, and Karl moves into the Wheatley garage.

Sling Blade has been compared to *Forrest Gump*, but *Sling Blade* has a much darker edge to it, reflected—deliberately—in its somber colors (Thornton said he wanted the film to "feel like black-and-white") and in the character of Doyle Hargraves (country singer Dwight Yoakam in an astounding performance). Doyle, Linda's sometime live-in boyfriend, is violent and abusive—possessed by the demons that fill the void left by a lack of love and caring in his own life.

Linda's boss and best friend, Vaughan (John Ritter), does his best to protect Frank and Linda but Vaughan's homosexuality makes him one of Doyle's favorite targets. As Karl observes the interaction of his new friends with Doyle, he comes to his own conclusion about the only way to save Frank.

Miramax

Billy Bob Thornton (left) and Lucas Black

Karl has read the Bible through, perhaps more than once, during his years in the hospital. Aware of his moral dilemma and of the consequences—in the eyes of God and other people—of his choices, he nevertheless places more value on his love for Frank and what he believes that requires of him.

"That boy lives inside his own heart," Karl says of Frank at one point in the film. "It's a mighty big place." A place that Karl Childers knows.

BOOKS

THE PATHWAY OF SERVICE

Right of Passage: The Heroic Journey to Adulthood *by Nancy Geyer Christopher (Cornell Press, 1996, 290 pages, $15 U.S.)*

Reviewed by David Orr, Cleveland

McDonald's claims that eating one of its Arch Deluxe sandwiches is the contemporary equivalent of wrestling a python. The media point to such "rites of passage" as smoking a first cigarette, getting a driver's license, graduating from college or going to jail.

Nancy Geyer Christopher argues that these experiences do not propel young people into adulthood. She dismisses confirmation and other religious rites as "mere external observances, excuses for celebration but devoid of their power to transform."

In the absence of authentic rites of passage, Christopher says young people are inventing negative rites such as joining gangs or becoming teenage parents. She writes, "American kids today postpone adulthood because many don't know how to grow up."

Christopher presents youth service as the pathway to the development of mature, contributing, adult members of society. She enthusiastically points

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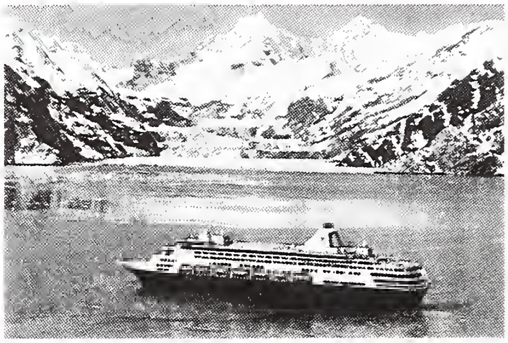


out the potential benefits of broadly based youth service programs but fails to wrestle with the difficulties of attracting and effectively utilizing those most in need of such experiences. *Right of Passage* echoes the work of Don Eberly, founder of the National Service Secretariat, who has presented the case for national youth service in a more detailed and thoughtful way.

Christopher's most helpful contribution is the description of youth service as a heroic journey to maturity. Borrowing from Joseph Campbell, she identifies seven "touchstones on the path to maturity" and the thoughts of those on the journey:

Call: "Let's get a little excitement outta life."

Departure: "I'm outta here."

Encounter with the guardian spirit: "Show me where to go, what to do."

Taking on the task: "What did I get myself into?"

Battle with the beast: "I can't handle it … help!"

The victory: "Wow … I learned something."

The return: "I'm a new person."

Each step is illustrated with stories of the service experiences of young people.

The heroic journey metaphor offers service program administrators an expanded vocabulary for discussing youth service experiences.

Mennonite service experiences are mentioned, and the story of a Goshen College student who spent a Study Service Term in Costa Rica and served with a Mennonite voluntary service program in Washington is featured.

Right of Passage includes an elementary guide to selecting a youth service experience, a limited directory of service programs and resources and a reflection exercise for youth service workers. All of these are of limited usefulness and duplicate resources available elsewhere.

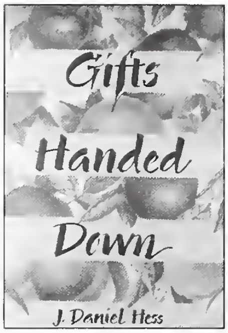
VALUES OF A LIFETIME

Gifts Handed Down *by J. Daniel Hess (Herald Press, 1996, 112 pages, $7.95 U.S./$11.35 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Mary Dyck, Hesston, Kan.

Three important events in Dan Hess' life led to the writing of this book. In the year previous his father was dying, the college where he taught was celebrating its centennial and his communication class was pondering culture and values.

Watching his father die led the author to think of the principles by which his father had lived. "Gifts handed down," he says, has a double meaning: gifts from the Divine Source of all bounty and gifts from previous generations to his father and to him now to be passed on to future generations.



The 10 gifts, or character values, include purity, dignity, generosity and serenity. Hess writes of each gift as it was understood in previous generations, then asks, How do we understand them today? How can we as committed and responsible Christians bring about the restoration or renewal of these gifts?

Rita Kandel Smith, a librarian at the University of Florida, heard Hess give a series of lectures that later became the chapters of this book. At the end of the book, she says, "When a gift is old, used and handed down, its value is often increasing rather than decreasing. This book is a provocative witness against the clamor of contemporary culture, the clutter of a competitive lifestyle and the frantic clutch for mall markdowns."

As we continue to search for ways to live more responsibly, this book is a valuable resource for youth and adult groups to study and discuss. Hess has many stimulating and challenging suggestions about where we have failed and are failing in our moral obligations as a Christian community. Much could be gained in our society if we would look at our heritage and the Scriptures reflectively as guidelines to pass on positive traditions and values.

Resources

- **Complete Evangelism: The Luke-Acts Model** by Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid (Herald Press, 1997, $14.99 U.S./ $21.50 Cdn.) shows a holistic evangelism uniting personal and social concerns.
- **Moonflowers at Dusk** by Anna Ruth Ediger Baehr (Birnham Wood Graphics, 1996, $10 U.S.; distributed by Wordsworth) is a collection of poetry. The author grew up in a Mennonite missionary family among the Southern Cheyenne in Oklahoma.
- **Annie** by Mary Christner Borntrager (Herald Press, 1997, $7.99 U.S./$11.40 Cdn.) is the final book in the Ellie's People series.
- **Keeping Salvation Ethical: Mennonite and Amish Atonement Theology in the Late Nineteenth Century** by J. Denny Weaver (Herald Press, 1997, $19.99 U.S./$28.50 Cdn.) is volume 35 in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History series.
- **I Have Decided to Follow Jesus** by David Witmer is a "user-friendly" Bible study book for new believers, especially those with little or no church background. Available from Eastern Mennonite Missions, (717) 898-2251; $3 U.S. each or $2.50 each for 10 or more.
- **Los Ninos** ("The Children") is a 14-minute video that follows two Bolivian boys through a day that includes washing windshields to earn money for their family. Available for free loan from Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; or your local MCC office.
- **More Than a Job** is a 23-minute video that shows how two groups, one in Bangladesh and one in Edmonton, recyle "junk" into jobs. Available for free loan from Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; or your local MCC office.
- **That They May Be One: Christian Churches in the Middle East** is a 29-minute video to help Christians in the West understand the history and present work of the church in the Middle East. Available for free loan from Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; or your local MCC office.

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Editorial

Be transformed

When we embark on the path of following Jesus, we commit ourselves to being changed. Following Jesus means being transformed into his image (2 Corinthians 3:18). If we aren't willing to change and be changed, we are on the wrong path.

The theme for this summer's special session of the General Conference Mennonite Church is "Transformed in Christ." I guess that it was chosen partly because our denomination is in the midst of change as we integrate with the Mennonite Church. But it is also an appropriate theme because we are all called—as individuals, as families, as congregations, as conferences—to be transformed.

The word "transformed" occurs only twice in the Protestant Bible, in the verse mentioned above and in Romans 12:2. There Paul commands the believers in Rome to "be transformed." He sets this command in opposition to being "conformed to this world [or age]."

The goal of our transformation is to become like Christ (see Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10). We seek to live our lives according to what the Bible refers to as "the age to come," not the present age. This is a lofty goal, and it is not one we attain overnight. Throughout our lives we are to be in the process of transformation.

We lose sight of this too easily. We get bogged down in our mundane affairs and forget that we have been called "out of darkness into [God's] marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Each day is an opportunity to live in that light.

Back in April, Danny Begaye, a member of my congregation and a staff person for Mennonite Indian Leaders Council, gave the sermon. He told of his own transformation from darkness into light. In despair one night years ago, he said, he took a bottle of Excedrin with alcohol in an attempt to end his life. But God rescued him. His mother and sister, who had recently given their lives to Christ, prayed for him and cared for him. As he cried out in his darkness, God came to him and welcomed him into the light.

God is everywhere: Not all of us experience such sudden, dramatic transformations, yet God comes to us wherever we are, in whatever circumstances, to welcome us into light. Danny's grandfather, a Navajo medicine man, had taught him that God is everywhere. Therefore, even though Danny had heard from Christians that the church building was "God's house," he knew deep down that God was not confined to that building but was present everywhere, even in Danny's darkness, just as the psalmist testified (Psalm 139:12).

> ***As we seek to follow Jesus in our daily lives, let us open ourselves to being changed, to being tranformed into the image of Christ.***

As we seek to follow Jesus in our daily lives, let us open ourselves to being changed, to being tranformed into the image of Christ. To do this we must, as Paul wrote, renew our minds (Romans 12:2). Such renewal requires meditating on God's Word, on the example of Christ, on the presence of God's Spirit within us and among us.

Transformation also applies to our corporate life. We cannot fall back on doing things as we always have, because to follow Christ means to change. At the same time, we cannot simply change for the sake of change. We must look to Christ to guide us to the way we are to change, so that we "may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

As you can see from the reports in this issue (pages 3-10), the General Conference Mennonite Church is open to change. Its programs involve learning, welcoming new believers, training leaders, entering situations of risk and service.

As we open ourselves each day to God's Spirit, we will walk a path that will change us. That can be scary, since we don't know what such change will involve, what it will mean for us. But we can entrust ourselves to God, who welcomes us into marvelous light in order to transform us into the image of Christ. *Gordon Houser*

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Inside

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A brand-new path / p. 11

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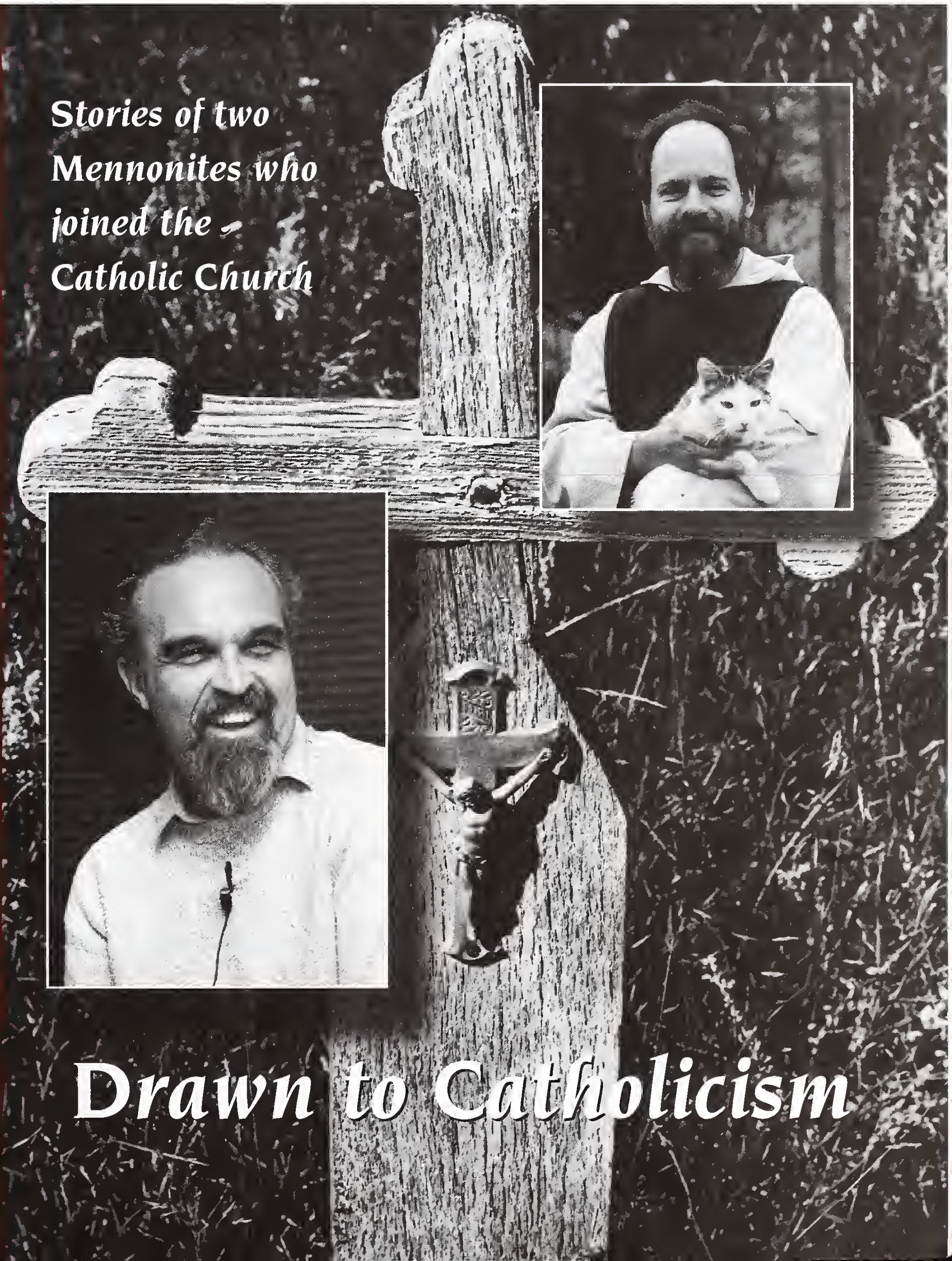
THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 10
MAY 27, 1997

- A path unfolding (page 3)
- How I became a Mennonite Catholic (page 6)
- The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak (page 8)



Stories of two Mennonites who joined the Catholic Church

Drawn to Catholicism

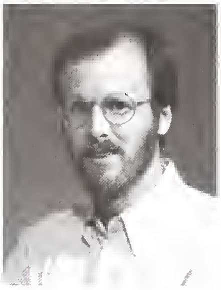
Prologue

Why do an issue on Mennonites who have become Catholic? Besides their interesting stories, these two men reflect what seems to be a growing trend of movement between Mennonites and other denominations. While such sharing with Protestant groups has received more attention, little has been written about sharing with Catholics.

I haven't had the opportunity to meet Eric Haarer, whose story begins on page 3, but I visited the monastery where he first lived as a monk. The people there spoke highly of him, and mostly because of him had a positive view of Mennonites and wanted to learn more about us. As you may observe from his article, he did not so much leave disgruntled as join another group because he saw it helping him be a better disciple of Jesus.

I met Ivan Kauffman at a consultation on Communion, held at the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Ivan's journey (page 6) is different from Eric's, as each of our journeys is unique. Our intent is that we may all learn how to be better disciples.

Lois Barrett concludes her three-part series of Bible studies (page 10) on how we handle differences of belief.



Karen McCabe-Juhnke describes her path toward learning to be anti-racist (page 11).

J.B. Miller warns us about a new scam called Greater Ministries (page 12).

In the news (page 13) learn the latest from the Integration Committee's work. *gh*

Next issue: Called to pastoral ministry

Cover: Photo of cross by RNS

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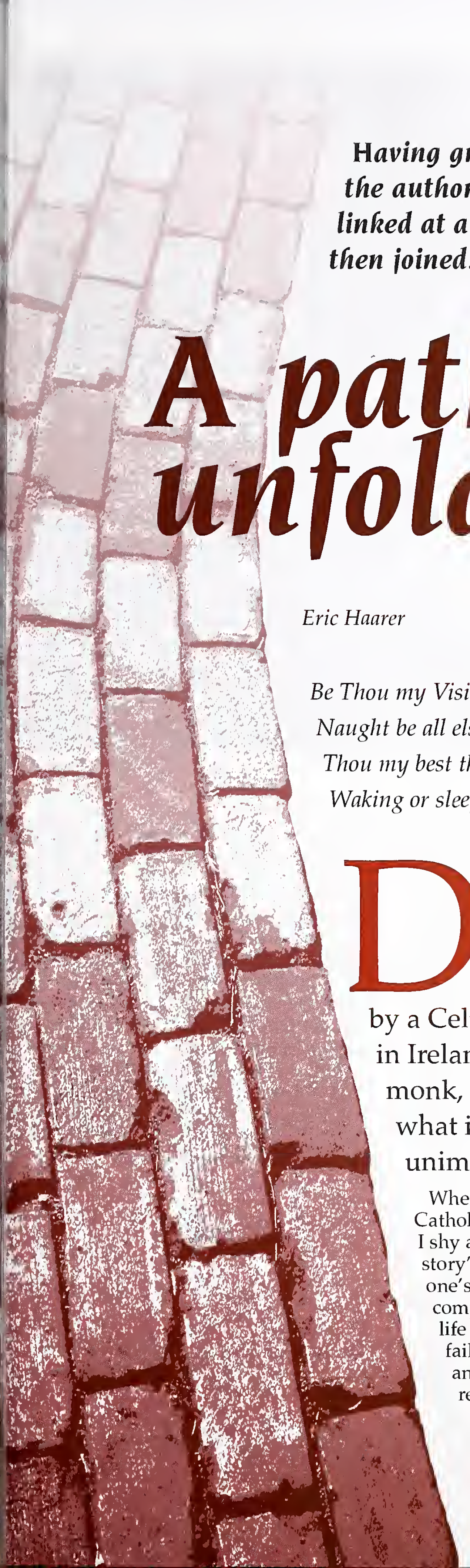


Having grown up in the Mennonite church, the author found community and worship linked at a Catholic monastery, which he then joined.

A path unfolding

Eric Haarer

Be Thou my Vision O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Eric Haarer holding Neri

During hymn-sings at Goshen (Ind.) College, I always hoped for #300, "Be Thou My Vision." I did not know then, nor would it have mattered, that that hymn was likely penned 1,000 years ago by a Celtic monk in Ireland. Now here I am, 20 years later, in Ireland, in the Roman Catholic Church, in the habit of a monk, still singing "Be Thou My Vision" and wondering what in the world brought me to this point, unimaginable such a short time ago.

When *The Mennonite* asked me to write about my "pilgrimage" to the Catholic Church, I balked for two reasons: One, I've never felt like a pilgrim. I shy away from terms like "pilgrimage" or "spiritual journey" or "faith story" because, hackneyed so quickly, they suggest a process estranged from one's "mundane" life. Your spiritual life is your whole life. It cannot be compartmentalized as can one's business life be isolated from one's family life or from one's life in a bowling league. I fear that telling my story will fail to convey the wholeness, the natural earthiness of the spiritual life, and will add to the mountain of pious piffle that abounds in American religious literature.

Second, past wounds and misunderstandings, even after 450 years, still cloud the relationship of Catholic and Protestant churches. Even

The spiritual life was not a tea party but an adventure story. God was no pet or mascot. He was a lion. And prayer was entering that lion's den.

Silence, work, play and prayer: *Eric at work on a wall at Holy Hill Hermitage in Ireland*

though for modern Mennonites, unlike members of some fundamentalist sects, converting to Catholicism would not be seen as joining "the whore of Babylon," still it would likely be looked on askance, like quitting one's job with UNICEF to work for General Dynamics. And many Catholics still condescendingly refer to Protestants as "our lost brethren," implying half-Christian status. I feared an article about my conversion might scratch open sores we'd thought healed over.

A connection: But because I have never experienced a discontinuity between my Mennonite past and my Catholic present, I intuit a connection. A connection I believe is stronger between Anabaptism and Catholicism than between Catholicism and many other Protestant denominations. My intention here is not so much to explore that connection as to tell a story, and in the telling perhaps some of the affinity will come to the fore.

The particulars of my pilgrimage are easy enough, though I still find the essence elusive. In 1981, two years after graduating from Goshen College, I moved to Phoenix to participate in the Mennonite voluntary service discipleship program led by pastors Gene and Mary Herr. This pivotal year of exploration into the spiritual life proved influential in many ways, but two stand out.

The first was a book tucked away on our unit house bookshelf: *Mystical Passion: Spirituality for a Bored Society* by William McNamara, the founder of the monastic order of which I am a now a member. This book spoke against all that I loathed in contemporary pop spirituality—the coziness, the "warm fuzzy," feel-good, hold-your-hands-in-a-circle-and-share spirituality—and argued instead for passion.

"What we need in gargantuan measures," Fr. McNamara wrote, "is an irrepressible zest for life." Mysticism (the spiritual life) was not couched in insipid and weakened phrases but in words akin to the Old Testament prophets. What I had hoped for was true: The spiritual life was not a tea party but an adventure story. God was no pet or mascot but a lion. And prayer was entering that lion's den.

The second major influence was a retreat two members of the Spiritual Life Institute (an imposing name for the "homey" monastic community founded by Fr. McNamara) gave for the Mennonite volunteers in the Phoenix area. What I read in *Mystical Passion* was embodied in the priest and sister who led the retreat. Their vivacity, accessibility and no-nonsense approach to spirituality was a breath of fresh air. I felt the kindling of a vision that was not mere words.

The following summer a number of us from the discipleship program traveled to Colorado as volunteer laborers for the monks who, having just moved from Arizona, were building a new monastery at the base of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Few of us had any idea what monastic life was about; finding out was not what motivated us. Lured by the mountains, an adventure and a worthy cause, we went. I returned the following summer. And the next. Eventually, I stayed.

In those early years I could not have articulated why I kept coming back, and I still find it difficult. Perhaps it was a desire not to become another yuppie in another office. Or a youthful desire to give my all for a noble cause. A desire not to find at the end of life that I had never really lived. In the end, a desire for God.

Be Thou my wisdom, be Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee, and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, I thy true son.
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee, one.

Falling in love: We usually think of conversion as a dramatic event. Paul getting knocked off his high horse, the good thief stealing heaven from the cross, and so forth. Some decisive turning point where we throw out the bad-old-self and take on the new. But conversion is also a process, a continual turning with one's whole being toward a destiny God unfolds day by day; a saying yes again and again to that destiny. It is a process with a beginning, but not an end. Mostly, it's a process of falling in love.

Conversion is initiated by God but usually mediated through people. We wish to become like those we love. I remember a visit with an elderly gentleman who, with his wife of 50 years, came regularly to Mass at our monastery in Colorado. He, too, was a convert to Catholicism. When I asked him why, he said that when he fell in love with his wife-to-be, who was Catholic, he converted. As simple as that. By his logic, no further explanation was necessary. Mine was a similar case: Before I fell in love with Catholicism, I fell in love with Catholics, with a community that was to become my family.

I've heard it said (by both Catholics and Protestants) that Catholics are good at worship and Protestants are good at community. And I've seen plenty of examples why this may seem so. I know Catholics who converted to Protestantism because they experienced a lack of community in their Catholic congregation, and I know Protestants who joined the Catholic church because they experienced a lack of worship in theirs. But this does not point to respective strengths but to a shared weakness, a false separation of the spiritual from the temporal, a lack of wholeness, of integration. If a Protestant church has good community but poor worship, then the community has deteriorated into a social club or support group. And if a Catholic congregation has good worship but poor community, that worship has deteriorated into superstition or aestheticism. In neither case is the situation healthy. That both situations abound is, unfortunately, all too evident.

"Healthy" was my first impression of the Spiritual Life Institute community: I experienced a lively, rugged, human climate where worship and community were not seen as poles on a continuum but integrally linked, the latter growing organically from the former. One who is related to God is, of necessity, related to all. The monks, both men and women mostly in their 30s and 40s, mirrored few of the stereotypes I'd held of monastic life. They sang some hymns in Latin, wore habits, maintained vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, but there were no dark gray walls, no somber, brooding characters, no escape from society. Rather a love of wilderness, of hiking and playing and laughter, and a humanizing balance of silence, work, play and prayer. And most of all a common vision, a common vocation, to foster such a lively human atmosphere that prayer would erupt, not as an isolated, titillating experience but a robust, transformative prayer meant to inform and transform not only the self but all of society. What was promoted in the monastery was meant for all. As their brochure put it, "The contemplative is not a special kind of person. Everyone is—or ought to be—a special kind of contemplative. Contemplation is not the privilege of a few. Contemplation is for everyone: monk, mother or businessman."

The years went by. I "took the habit" and made the vows, with no regrets. When I finally converted to Catholicism, it was more an acknowledgement of a transformation accomplished than a leap in the dark. It was simply the next step (albeit one taken in fear and trembling) along the path I knew was mine, fashioned for me, by my Father. At no point did I see this process (nor do I view it so now) as a rejection of my Anabaptist heritage. All that I found good and true and beautiful in my Mennonite upbringing stayed with me. Indeed, so much of what is great about the Anabaptist vision I found paralleled in the Catholicism I'd come to experience within the monastery: the living of one's life for community, for the kingdom of God; the embrace of the cross; faith informing all areas of one's life; the claim that holiness is not meant for a few but for all. Of course, differences exist, culturally, historically, theologically. But these differences are usually less than and often other than what we would think. They are not insurmountable.

High King of heaven, when victory is won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright
heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

"Destiny" seems such a noble word. But it is not unique to a chosen few. There is no one for whom God has not fashioned a noble destiny. Not one soul does God consider inessential to the establishment of the kingdom. Every story is meant to be unique, steeped in meaning and refulgent in glory. We must never allow a false humility to impede God from fashioning us into the noble creatures we were created to be. Humility is not thinking little of ourselves but thinking of ourselves little. Each of us struggles with our destiny, no less so in Catholicism than in Protestantism, in the monastery than in the marketplace, in my life than in yours. We struggle with our egoism, our prejudices, our histories. And in that struggle to follow the path God has laid for us, in that endless process of conversion, we find meaning. The path may lead anywhere, to building a new monastery in Ireland, to working in the inner city, to raising a family or to farming land handed down through generations. But followed faithfully, the path that traces many routes will always lead to the One who has loved us from the beginning, the One whose great desire is to fulfill our heart's deepest longing by drawing all things unto himself.

Eric Haarer is a Carmelite monk at Holy Hill Hermitage in Ireland.

I experienced a lively, rugged, human climate where worship and community were not seen as poles on a continuum but integrally linked, the latter growing organically from the former.

***Driven by the question,* How does the church make *peace? the author opts for the imperfect but undivided church and becomes a* Catholic.**

How I *became* a Mennonit

Ivan J. Kauffman

When I was 10 years old I was baptized by a Mennonite bishop. It took place at Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church, where my father was pastor. The bishop was his cousin, Milo Kauffman, and I remember it as a family affair. Most of my friends were present, and the congregation was like an extended family.

Although I didn't completely understand it at the time, I sensed something profound had occurred. Now I realize that by that event I had become both a member of the universal body of Christ and a member of the Mennonite church.

For the past 28 years Lois, my wife, and I have been Catholic. We are members of St. Peter's on Capitol Hill in Washington, where we are active lay leaders and advocates for peace and social justice. During the 1980s I wrote a weekly newspaper column on peace and social justice that appeared in Catholic newspapers throughout the United States.

We frequently refer to ourselves as Mennonite Catholics, since we still hold the beliefs about peace and discipleship that we learned as Mennonites. We maintain close ties with our families and prize the opportunities we've had to meet with and speak to Mennonite groups.

Mennonites often ask us, "Why did you become Catholics?"

It all began as a teenager, when I absorbed the idea that I was expected to be perfect, or nearly so. But since being perfect meant being honest, I had to admit I wasn't perfect. At first I thought that when I grew up I'd be able to follow the rules the way all the adults around me seemed to.

Sinless person: The older I got, the more powerful the temptations, and the less I resisted them. But I continued to believe that if I tried harder I would somehow become the sinless person I thought I was supposed to be. This only made me feel guiltier about my defeats.

I decided to solve the problem by giving up Christian belief entirely. But when I tried that I became depressed. Fortunately I was married at the time and had a young son I was devoted to. He more than anything got me through those terrible, hopeless days.

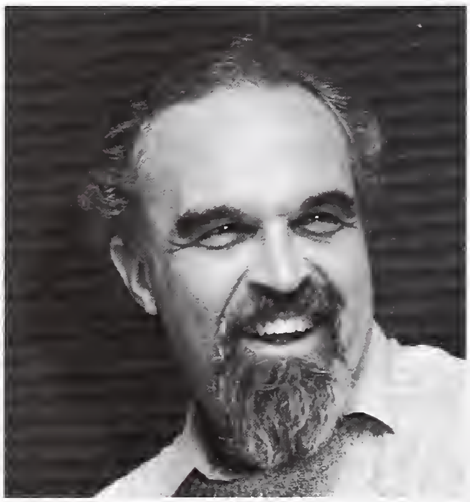
At that point I experienced a conversion. God spoke to me in many ways. The faculty at Goshen (Ind.) College never gave up on me, though I was often difficult. My wife remained loyal, even though our relationship was painful. A series of chapel talks by John Howard Yoder played a major role, and I ran across books that gave me a new perspective on what it means to be a Christian.

The thought of leaving the Mennonite church had not entered my mind. The Amish Mennonite community Lois and I had grown up in was the only world we had ever known. It gave us a sense of belonging that we treasured.

Working on two history research projects during my final year at Goshen led me to the Catholic Church. In the first I looked at the early Anabaptists from a Jungian perspective and discovered they had experienced the same liberating sense of the Spirit I had. I also discovered that for several centuries prior to the Anabaptists the medieval monastics had referred to their vows as a "second baptism."

I had always viewed the centuries between the New Testament and the Reformation as a long dark age. My discovery that the idea of a second baptism had existed long before the Anabaptists of the 16th century forced me to take a second look, and I decided to do a second research project on the church's early history.

I assumed that the New Testament



Honest thing to do: *Ivan Kauffman*

Catholic

church had followed Christ faithfully but that soon after the New Testament era ended the church had departed from the true faith and had not returned to it until the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. My goal was to find the exact point when the church had departed from the true faith.

But the more I researched the clearer it became that there had been great continuity. I could find no real difference between the first-century church and the churches that followed it for the next 300 years. Even when the Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity there was still great continuity.

It was then I looked at the church as a gift rather than an accomplishment. When that happened, I realized I could be a Catholic. I had discovered that the church had never been perfect—and that so long as it included people like me it would never be perfect.

I had attended Catholic worship only once in my life, many years earlier, and did not know a single Catholic. I tried discussing my growing attraction to the Catholic faith with two of my teachers at Goshen but found they were not comfortable doing so. Lois was dumbfounded. I was amazed. Nothing could have surprised me the way this experience did.

Since becoming a Catholic was unthinkable, I decided to define myself as a "Catholic Mennonite," a Mennonite who was open to Catholic perspectives. I spent two years at the Earlham School of Religion, a Quaker seminary, preparing to serve the church as a writer.

Controversies: Instead I spent two years (1966-68) as executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section. This was at the height of the Vietnam War; I was in my 20s and involved in the controversies of those years. We later learned that our home telephone had been tapped by the CIA because the Johnson administration considered MCC part of the "dangerous" peace movement.

In fact the church-based peace movement of the '60s was anything but dangerous. Although many individuals protested the war, the churches (including Mennonite churches) were so divided there was little we could do other than hold meetings to discuss the problem.

As the war wore on, consuming lives by the thousands, I wondered, How does the church make peace? Surely it's not enough for Christians to stand by while innocent children are burned alive, doing nothing more than condemning the evil done by others and congratulating ourselves for not being personally involved.

Things came to a head when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. I was in New York, where one of the Mennonite peace committees was meeting. When I flew home to Washington the next day, I could see large portions of the city still smoldering. For the next few days the U.S. capital was like a ghost town.

It was then I knew I had to join the Catholic Church. Two things drove me.

The first was the answer to my question, How does the church make peace? The church makes peace by being the church. It had become clear to me during the Vietnam War years that if the church is to speak effectively for the world's poor and powerless, it must speak with one voice and can only do so if it is united as an institution.

The second was King's witness to honesty. While the United States was suffering its first military defeat in Vietnam, it was also experiencing its greatest moral victory in the Civil Rights movement. That victory came through Gandhian techniques, the chief being the power of truth. I had no idea what it would do for peace if I were to become a Catholic, but I knew it was the only honest thing for me to do; the last thing the world needed was any more dishonest people, especially in leadership.

It was a costly, painful decision. It meant leaving MCC, where my work had been fulfilling and meaningful. It meant breaking ties with our Mennonite friends. It meant painful confrontations with our families. It caused a sense of betrayal among the many people who had supported me during my career in the Mennonite church. In many ways we had to start our life as a family all over again.

Enormous turmoil: The transition wasn't made easier by what was going on in the Catholic Church at that time. The great changes produced by the Vatican Council were just being felt, and there was enormous turmoil. The Catholic pastor who received us asked if we really wanted to join the Catholic Church. I had the sense he wasn't sure he still wanted to be a Catholic.

We persevered and found warmth and acceptance in the Catholic congregation we joined. The greatest surprise during our first years as Catho-

> ***Although many individuals protested the war, the churches (including Mennonite churches) were so divided there was little we could do other than hold meetings to discuss the problem.***

What Catholics and Mennonites share is the belief that the Christian faith is a way of life.

lics was discovering how important the Eucharist was becoming. This was not something we had expected or even noticed until after it had happened. When we joined the Catholic Church, neither of us believed its teaching about Christ's physical presence in the Communion meal, but our beliefs have changed by participating in Catholic worship.

For the first 10 years after becoming a Catholic I worked on a doctorate in history at Georgetown University and worked at odd jobs. Lois served as a teacher in the inner-city schools of the District of Columbia, teaching pre-kindergarten. Our two children grew up in the city. They are now married, and we have two grandchildren, who bring much joy to our lives.

What have I learned from spending the first half of my life in the Mennonite world, and the second half in the Catholic world?

Most important is that Mennonites and Catholics are much less different than we expected. We have had to give up nothing essential to our Mennonite beliefs to be Catholic, and there is a great deal in common.

What Catholics and Mennonites share is the belief that the Christian faith is a way of life. There are differences in what that way of life should be, but it's an important starting point.

Mennonites in the past have experienced hostility as conscientious objectors. Now many other Christians are coming to respect Mennonites for their peace witness, and many Mennonites ask how they can relate to other Christians.

That usually means relating to other Protestants. But as this ecumenical process continues, Mennonites will also often find themselves in conversation with Catholics. Perhaps when that happens they will experience the same richness we have in bridging these two communities.

Ivan J. Kauffman lives in Washington.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak

Toward a church that emphasizes discipleship, conversion and communion

Let us imagine together what would happen if our churches—of all denominations and traditions—were once again to become places where discipleship, conversion and communion were equally present and equally stressed.

It would be a church where new members were constantly being added and nurtured in the faith—as is now the case in the Evangelical churches.

At the same time it would be a church whose members would be constantly giving themselves to the world in practical service, both as individuals and as groups, and would be struggling to transform society by challenging its political commitments to violence and injustice—as the Mennonite churches are doing today through Mennonite Central Committee and their many other programs.

And it would also be a church constantly at worship, at prayer, its members constantly being renewed at the Communion table—as is the case in the Orthodox and Catholic churches today.

The good news is that none of the existing churches have to give up anything essential to their current practice for this renewed church to come into being. They will only need to add to what they are already doing, and they will be greatly enriched by doing so.

Evangelism will become more effective by being joined to the church's worship and to its service to the world.

Discipleship will have much greater effect because it will be empowered by ongoing conversion and spiritual nurturing, and its ranks increased by new converts.

And the church's worship will become more meaningful and relevant by being joined directly to its participants' life in the world.

Above all, the world will benefit when the church is united in this way. Then and only then can the church achieve its mission as peacemaker, for only when we have become converted disciples in communion—with the risen Christ and with each other, throughout the world—will we have the power to end warfare's terrible reign.

Deep in our hearts we know this is what the church is intended to be, and what it can be. What we do not know is how God intends for it to come to be.

But we can act on the leading we already have. Clearly we are being called in our time to end our mutual criticisms and to begin instead an exchange of gifts with one another.

That alone can give us the strength the early Christians had—the strength to transform the world.

For it is still true: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." *Ivan J. Kauffman*

Letters

COPIES FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

I want to commend you for an outstanding issue of *The Mennonite* on "Facing Death" (April 8). I would like to share copies with family and with grieving friends. *Willard Krabill, Goshen, Ind.*

Editor's note: *Copies of this issue are available for $2 U.S. each; $1 each for five or more.*

THANKS FROM DEATH ROW

I am an inmate currently on Florida's death row. I have been getting your magazine for a few months now. My adopted mother, Frieda, subscribed for me so I could learn more about her religion. I want to let you know your magazine does help. Not only does it have lessons for everyday needs but it lets me know that there are people out there that care. Thank you very much for all of that. *Bobby Steverson, Union Correctional Institution, Raiford, Fla.*

CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL WORK

Since 1980 I have been director of the international work of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). During that time I received Mennonite Central Committee news and had frequent interactions with MCC folks, mostly in the field but also in Akron, Pa., on a couple of occasions.

CRWRC's work focuses on income and agriculture, health and education. As importantly, we've sought results in the spiritual, cultural and social dimensions. A challenge, too, was to assist small nonprofit organizations to grow and mature.

I am on a leave from CRWRC. In July 1998 I expect to return to CRWRC's work with churches, partner organizations and communities, overseas and in North America.

I am working as an adviser to the Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, located in the South Bronx section of New York City. I hope to help BK develop a national and international program. By the way, I recently wrote MCC about the possibility of MCC volunteers joining in on Banana Kelly work in the South Bronx.

The reason I am writing is the summary you wrote of the MCC U.S. board meeting and the identity crisis (March 11 issue, page 13). I thought your article was interesting and provocative. It seems clear to me that the location and fund-raising questions are an expression of the uncertainties about the future, about what a faith-based global work should be in the 21st century. CRWRC is facing similar challenges (opportunities). *Gary Nederveld, Grand Rapids, Mich.*

MATERIAL RESOURCE PROJECTS

I live near Newton and volunteer at the Mennonite Central Committee resource center in North Newton. I have noticed that when MCC makes an appeal the response is usually generous. Everyone is grateful.

I have also noticed in processing kits or food boxes that sometimes instructions about size and/or weight were not followed carefully enough. The items did not all fit into the box to be used. These items must then be returned or exchanged when possible. This also creates extra work for the staff at the resource center. The same size box for a given project is important for shipping. It is also important to have some uniformity for the sake of the recipients. A special thanks to those who participate in these projects. *Rachel Wiebe Easter, Hesston, Kan.*

LIKES OUR WEB SITE

Congratulations on your web/print versions of *The Mennonite*. I happened to be reading your April 22 issue today and decided to call up your web site as listed in an article. Your web version is of equal quality in readability and visual impact as your print version. *Brenda Webber, American Bible Society news director*

FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Hualien, Taiwan—Our hearts were warmed again last week when without warning a large box of children's toys arrived at the hospital post office with our names on it. The toys were sent by a Sunday school class in Wadsworth, Ohio. The plastic and metal toys that can be washed will be placed in the playroom on the pediatric ward at the hospital. The fluffy toys will be given to children who must be in the hospital for a prolonged time or who are from poor homes. The pediatric social worker will help in the distribution of the toys.

Six months ago we received a check for more than $500 from the children of the Doylestown, Pa., church to help buy tables, chairs, books and videos for the playroom on the pediatric ward. Eighteen months ago, a Lancaster, Pa., sewing circle sent us several boxes of baby quilts to be given to newborn babies and their parents.

We wish that we could share with you the joy on the faces of the children and parents who have received these gifts. *Chris and Lois Leuz*

Botswana—Thank God for the joint efforts of the Botswana government and the churches to address the issues involved with the HIV/AIDS crisis facing this country.

Pray for Nuggie and her cousin, who are new in the Christian faith.

Praise God that a man dying from tuberculosis, which had gone into his spine, leaving him partially paralyzed, found peace in God. He was the host "father" for Rudy and Sharon Dirks' village live-in. Just a few months ago he was strong and healthy, walking his cattle several miles to their watering spot. Traditional medicine didn't help him. He placed his trust in Christ and found peace in listening to Scripture read and prayers before he died.

While there is much to be thankful for, we find that several team members need prayer in regard to health concerns.

Pray for a consultation planned for mid-May in South Africa for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission workers and African Independent Church leaders. Pray we will be able to discern what God wants us to do in the Bible teaching ministry in the next five to 10 years. *Angela and Erwin Rempel*

A hike through the wilderness

Gentleness, patience and mercy should guide the discipleship process.

Lois Barrett

Among the New Testament passages that speak about the process of discipling are 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22; Jude 19-23 (after a section on people who preach and practice falsely), and Galatians 6:1-2.

These texts are set in churches where not everybody is in the same place. Not everyone has progressed equally along the road of discipleship.

Not everyone is to be treated alike. Some are to be admonished, others encouraged. Some need help or immediate rescue. But all are to be treated in a spirit of gentleness, humbly, recognizing that you, too, could be tempted, sharing the other's burdens (Galatians), with mercy (Jude), with patience toward all (1 Thessalonians).

This is the preferred method of church discipline in the New Testament. Notice that it looks a lot like the preferred method of Christian nurture, invitational rather than coercive. And it looks like an evangelism method. Evangelism, Christian nurture and church discipline are all part of a continuum, all part of the path of discipleship and being discipled.

Sometimes people treat conversion like a fairy tale. Once the prince marries the princess and makes a commitment, the story ends and we assume they live happily ever after. But marriage isn't like that, and neither is the Christian life. The commitment—conversion, baptism, becoming part of the people of God—is not the end of the story but the beginning of a journey.

This journey is like a hike through the wilderness, which is sometimes beautiful, sometimes unfriendly. There are dangerous cliffs and quicksand and wild animals, scorching heat and bitter cold, stretches of mud and stretches of desert, where you wonder if you will ever find water. Getting out alive depends on staying with the group and following the guide.

Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, has already blazed the trail for us and is now our guide through the Holy Spirit. We are not individual hikers but a group, the church, the people of God on pilgrimage.

Life and death: Evangelism (helping people join the hiking group), Christian nurture (encouraging them along the way) and church discipline (helping them get back on the right track) are all part of the same process. Evangelism and church discipline are not opposites; salvation and discipleship are connected. You can't be saved without following the guide and joining the hiking group. The process of discipling is a matter of life and death.

All Christians are in the process of becoming more transformed into the image of Christ. All of us have far to go on the path of discipleship. When there is a commitment to gentleness, patience and mercy in accompanying others along the Way, we will be reluctant to kick people out of the church.

> ***Evangelism, Christian nurture and church discipline are all part of a continuum, all part of the path of discipleship and being discipled.***

There is a limited place for excommunication or for counseling people out of the church. If someone is destroying the group or trying to lead it into quicksand, you have to do something about it. But even when people are expelled, it must be with great sadness and care, with hope and efforts to bring the person back into safety.

Our individualistic age abhors the idea of church discipline. People say, No one can tell me what to do. The church is sometimes seen as a spiritual filling station for individuals rather than as the people of God.

We need groups in our churches small enough to practice love and accountability, where people can learn to disciple each other on the small matters as well as the big ones. They can learn with a small group of people how to be different yet stay connected with gentleness, patience and mercy.

In the dominant culture, most people think you can only be connected with people who agree with you, or if you are connected, there has to be agreement. I don't use the word "support" because I never know what it means. People may use it to mean loving someone or agreeing with someone. Many assume you cannot love people without agreeing with them. But our task as Christians is to be different yet stay connected, to be able to disagree and to love at the same time. This is the same dynamic operating in loving enemies.

In my congregation we have had a number of people over the years who have asked to become members even though they could not fully support the peace position of the congregation. I have said to them, Do you recognize that peace is an important part of the witness of this congregation? Are you willing to be taught in that direction? Are you willing not to teach otherwise in this congregation? A few have turned away sadly. Others have joined and become strong advocates for Jesus' way of peace.

Several months ago, a relatively new member got up on Sunday morning to tell how her life had been changed since she met Christ and the church. She had grown up in a family where nearly everybody carried a handgun and where she had been subjected to physical abuse. Violence was a way of life. As she has come to be part of a Mennonite congregation, she is gladly learning to make peace a way of life. She said her mother is now becoming a believer, and her younger daughter has come to church for the first time.

Uncritically patriotic: Others, like me, came to the Mennonite church because of the peace position. I grew up knowing nothing about Mennonites or conscientious objection to the military. I was naive about issues of war and peace, uncritically patriotic. During the Vietnam War, while I was at the University of Oklahoma, my views on war did a 180-degree turn. When I came into Mennonite Volun-

Speaking out

A brand-new path

Learning to be anti-racist

Karen McCabe-Juhnke

In Maya Angelou's book *Wouldn't Take Nothing For My Journey Now* she tells a story of Mrs. Annie Johnson. In 1903, Mrs. Johnson "stepped from the road that seemed to have been chosen for her and cut herself a brand-new path." This Arkansas mother of two toddlers had been through a disastrous marriage, was barely able to read or add, and she was a "Negro."

In her words, "I looked up the road I was going and back the way I come, and since I wasn't satisfied, I decided to step off the road and cut me a new path." She began serving meat pies alongside the road halfway between two factories. Soon her business grew into a store where customers could buy cheese, pickles, canned goods, soft drinks, writing tablets and leather for worn-out shoes. Her new path offered her hope for the future.

Participating in the Damascus Road anti-racism training was like cutting a new path for my life. Frankly, I was "pushed" onto this new path—the Damascus Road—but I am on it, nonetheless. If it weren't for my brother and sister sojourners on the same path, I would have stepped off, lost my way.

Last spring I was asked to participate in the Damascus Road Project, an extensive anti-racism training program for Anabaptist congregations, colleges, conferences and other institutions. I am European-American. Could I confront the racism I lived and practiced for most of my life? Would I simply end up immobilized by feelings of guilt and helplessness?

I grew up in a racist home. Family members did not belong to the Ku Klux Klan or white supremacist hate groups, but it was there: the racial jokes; the references to people of color not measuring up; the look of surprise, almost disbelief, when "one of them" contributed to society.

Therefore, a significant step in the Damascus Road training for me was to be confronted with my whiteness and the privileges accompanying it: access to money, a good education, a decent job, to be trusted and listened to, not having to think about my skin color.

The process of this faith-based training event was unlike any other I have experienced. Following our first evening of introductions and agreement to a covenant, I realized I must trust the process if I were to enter this new territory with an open mind.

At times I experienced denial, anger, sadness and shame for not having been taught the truth in school and at home, for my lack of sensitivity, for my self-absorption and ignorance. At other times I felt the process spinning out of control. But I learned I don't always have to be in control. I had come to trust the process. In doing so I experienced moments of discovery and transformation.

Crossroads, an interfaith ministry for racial justice, provided the training. That name took on a special meaning for me as I reflect on my life—before Damascus Road and after Damascus Road. I am reminded of the quote by Marita Golden—"Race is the tar baby in our midst; touch it and you get stuck"—from the introduction of *Skin Deep: Black Women and White Women Write About Race.*

The Damascus Road process provided the education, tools and support necessary for me to confront the racism in my life, to empower me for training those I work with and to enable the procedure of dismantling institutional racism within my own church institution.

I learned it's not about feeling guilty, looking for someone to blame or patronizing people of color by offering white help and money. It's about being an anti-racist. It's about taking a good, hard look at oneself as a white individual, about being open to change and a new way of thinking, of being proactive.

My involvement in the process of dismantling the institutional racism so prevalent in our society and churches today gives me hope and sustains me.

Annie Johnson cut for herself "a new path" that brought her a more hopeful future. The Damascus Road process has done the same for me. I also have hope that the path remains well-worn so my children will be able to find their way. This path cannot be walked alone. Join me on the Damascus Road, won't you?

Karen McCabe-Juhnke is assistant personnel secretary for the Commission on Overseas Mission.

For more information on Damascus Road contact Regina Shands Stoltzfus at (216) 581-2448, or Tobin Miller Shearer at (717) 859-3889.

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tary Service after I graduated, I was pleased to find a church unapologetically against the war in Vietnam. I came into the Mennonite church because of its theology of peace.

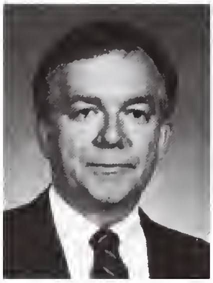
Peace and evangelism are not separate issues.

I didn't come with my peace theology all worked out. But there were people, books, *The Mennonite* magazine, opportunities to serve. There were General Conference Mennonite Church staff people who hired me to write and edit less than a year after I had become a Mennonite. And I began a journey of peace.

Peace and evangelism are not separate issues. If peace is at the core of our faith, will it not be part of our evangelistic message? Will not a witness for peace also invite others to faith?

To practice discipling each other gently, patiently and mercifully means we will not all look alike. There will be an accepted range of diversity. We will learn to love and stay connected with people who think and act differently from us. But we will all strive to follow Jesus Christ, our leader and guide, our Lord and our Savior from the powers of evil and death.

Lois Barrett is executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. This is the last part of an abridged version of a presentation she gave at the Members in the Military Consultation last November. (Part I appeared in the April 8 issue, Part II in the April 22 issue.)



J.B. Miller is vice president for financial services for Mennonite Mutual Aid and manager of Mennonite Foundation.

Can we learn from our mistakes?

Beware of a new pyramid scheme from Greater Ministries in Florida.

J.B. Miller

Few people active in the charitable community have not heard of the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy. New Era, as it is commonly called, promised charitable organizations who invested with them that they would receive their money back, and it would be doubled in the process. Millions of dollars were invested in this program, and many organizations did in fact receive their initial investments back twofold.

The news about New Era traveled quickly throughout the charitable community, which only brought in more dollars. When asked where the matched dollars came from, the explanation was that there were 10 wealthy individuals who wanted to support charities. Since they didn't want to bother with finding worthwhile charities on their own, they used New Era as a conduit.

Everything seemed to be working fine until May 1995, when *The Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page article suggesting this was nothing more than an illegal Ponzi scheme, also known as a pyramid scheme. Money coming in was going out to pay previous investors, and there were in fact no wealthy donors supporting the work of New Era. The amount of money eventually lost in this scheme boggles my mind.

New Era operated primarily on the East Coast, and anyone who reads a daily newspaper had access to the story. You would think people had learned from this. Apparently not.

An organization known as Greater Ministries of Tampa (Fla.), a subsidiary of Greater Ministries, Inc., Grand Cayman, British West Indies, is making promises similar to those of New Era, and individuals are standing in line to give their money away. One meeting in Pennsylvania attracted over 700. Some Christians are particularly drawn to Greater Ministries because it does have some active ministries that donors can visit and see in action.

Individuals are encouraged to make a "donation" to the organization. At the end of the first month, 10 percent of the "donation" is returned. This continues until all the money is returned and additional money is given. In some cases it adds up to double what the original "donation" was, if the donor redonates part or all of the returned funds.

Double your money: How do they do it? To quote from their own literature: "We believe that God has given us a system by which we can take the blessings of God and cause them to increase. This is a plan of God. There are those in the media and in government who doubt that we do what we say we do to increase the gifts that are given."

Doubt is an understatement. According to an article in the Lancaster, Pa., *Intelligencer Journal*, the state of Pennsylvania issued a cease-and-desist order against the organizer and Greater Ministries. Attorney Michael Byrne, who heads the Pennsylvania Security Commission's enforcement area, stated, "What they are offering is illegal in Pennsylvania. And if people are using the U.S. mail or other forms of shipping to send money across state lines or out of the country, they could be violating federal laws as well."

Is that not warning enough? Apparently not. This organization continues to operate, and Mennonites continue to participate. At least one Mennonite is active in promoting it. People who participate are instructed to send a money order or cashier's check, and when the money is returned it comes back in cash, cashier's check or money order. One doesn't have to be a certified public accountant to wonder why they operate that way. It is virtually impossible to stop payment on a money order or cashier's check, and the paper trail is much more difficult to piece together.

When asked how they invest the money to earn such high returns, the organizers say they invest in options, precious metals and overseas markets. Sorry folks, those types of investments don't give consistent returns of 100 percent or even close to that. Investments of this type are also volatile and can be about as risky as gambling in Las Vegas. None of us would allow a fellow believer to come into our communities and promote a weekend excursion to Las Vegas. Yet this "donation" is every bit as risky. This operation will only sustain itself until there are no more suckers willing to donate. It will then collapse.

> *None of us would allow a fellow believer to come into our communities and promote a weekend excursion to Las Vegas. Yet this "donation" is every bit as risky.*

A comment made by an investigator with the Pennsylvania Securities Commission is particularly troubling. He said his investigation points to the fact that in Pennsylvania, the Greater Ministries organization has targeted the Mennonite and Amish communities.

What a pathetic commentary. For a church that has Christian stewardship as a central part of its theology, you would think all of us should know better. Apparently we don't.

News

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IC develops proposals for summer sessions

Chicago—There will be plenty for General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) delegates, meeting this summer in Winnipeg and Orlando, Fla., respectively, to discuss and respond to.

Meeting here May 9-10, the Integration Committee (IC) developed proposals and reports for the GC and MC General Boards (GB) to bring to their delegate bodies.

In its last meeting (see March 25 issue, page 13), the IC made six proposals to the MC, GC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) General Boards. This time members heard responses from those boards and from an advisory group.

"When are we going to hear from the person in the pew?" asked Ted Rempel, Edmonton. "All these people are in leadership."

The IC discussed at length how to look at the broader picture and not get bogged down by details. Donella Clemens, Souderton, Pa., said that "we get caught up in trying to combine what already is instead of creating something new and then seeing how the current structures can uphold the new vision."

Name: The three GBs affirmed the name Mennonite Church this spring. IC will recommend that the boards present to delegates this summer both reasons for the name and objections to recommending it.

> **"When are we going to hear from the person in the pew?"**
>
> ***Ted Rempel***

Regional paradigm: The IC recommended giving a rationale for using a regional concept in structuring the new denomination; for example, forming mission structures around regions.

General Board composition: All the women present questioned the advisability of a women's associate group represented on the new GB. Ruth Suter, San Francisco, asked if there should be any representation from associate groups. Lindsey Robinson, Harrisburg, Pa., said at least some of the associate groups should be represented for now, with the hope that eventually there would be no need for them. Other IC members agreed.

Jim Schrag, GC general secretary, said that an MC-GC balance also needs to be addressed in the composition of a new GB.

The group agreed that guiding principles for forming a new GB include anti-racism, anti-sexism, a balance of GC and MC members and a manageable size.

Denominational assemblies: IC co-chair John C. Murray suggested a transition period of meeting every two years—i.e., meet in 1999 and 2001—then moving to every three years, as proposed earlier, or four. CMC general secretary Helmut Harder said that if assemblies are scheduled for every four years, special assemblies could be held in the alternate years.

Program boards: The IC asked if Mennonite Mutual Aid should be included—it was not earlier because it operates only in the United States and works with many different Mennonite groups. Schrag suggested that MMA deserves a special discussion on ways to tie it closely to the new church.

Timetable: IC dealt with the question of what needs to be done by 1999. They recommended to the GBs that delegates should vote then on whether the two GBs should become one, as well as on a constitution, financial arrangement and incorporation. IC recommended that in March 1998 the two GBs decide if 1999 is feasible for forming a new General Board.

Regional meetings: The IC decided to plan for holding a meeting in each of the four proposed regions (U.S. East, U.S. Central, U.S. West, Canada) this fall in order to present information and receive feedback from representatives of each area conference.

In other business, the IC agreed to

- bring an IC budget to the two GBs in the fall;
- meet again Sept. 19-20. *Gordon Houser*

Inside the news

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Active Canadian churchman dies / p. 17

Court ruling keeps Colombia seminary open / p. 18

The 18th annual Nebraska quilt and craft auction to benefit Mennonite Central Committee, held April 4-5, raised $137,500. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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A "Kentuckiana Mennonite Gathering" will be held June 7 for all interested people in the Greater Louisville, Ky., area, hosted by Paoli (Ind.) Mennonite Fellowship. Call (502) 451-4506.

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Although cold weather kept attendance figures and total receipts down at the Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale, April 11-12, the quilt auction set a new record, raising $139,595. The top selling quilt, an appliqued Country Peacock from Pennsylvania, brought $5,750. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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The Kauffman Museum, North Newton, Kan., received an Award of Excellence from the Kansas Museums Association for the exhibit "The Gift of Hope: The Story of the Mennonite Central Committee, 1920-1995." Rachel Pannabecker, museum director, coordinated the exhibit team. Robert Kreider, North Newton, was guest curator. Robert Regier, professor of art at Bethel College, North Newton, and Chuck Regier, the museum's exhibit designer and fabricator, designed "The Gift of Hope."

One billion people worldwide were unemployed or underemployed in 1995, up from 820 million in 1994, according to a United Nations report. Overall, 30 percent of the world's labor force lacks an adequate job. (*The Marketplace*)

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A conference on the healing mission of the church is scheduled for June 13-14 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. The conference will examine resources in the church's ministry that lead to healing and wholeness. For more information or to register contact the AMBS continuing education office at (219) 296-6207 or via e-mail at bsawatzky@ambs.edu.

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On April 3, 40 Bluffton (Ohio) College students, faculty and community members gathered in a nonviolent demonstration in front of the Allen County (Ohio) courthouse to protest the U.S. government's unconditional support of Israel despite repeated human rights violations. The hour-long demonstration included singing, reading from the Hebrew Bible and sharing comments. One supporter of Israel circled the courthouse in his truck screaming extremist remarks at the demonstrators, who were gathered on the sidewalks holding signs that read "Justice for Palestinians" and "Cut aid to Israel." The group received no other responses from passersby that were overtly negative. The Bluffton College Peace Club coordinated the event in response to the U.S. veto in the United Nations Security Council that prevented the issuing of sanctions against Israel for human rights violations, and to show the club's solidarity with Christian Peacemaker Teams Hebron after completion of the 700-hour fast to draw attention to the Israeli government's scheduled demolition of 700 Palestinian houses.

Praise, prayer and self-esteem

Emily Will

Dallas, Texas—Not knowing her label reads "bossy," Elizabeth Soto, Moline, Ill., left, is treated accordingly during a small-group exercise on stereotypes at the 13th Hispanic Mennonite Women's Conference, held here April 3-6. Gwen Groff, right, who serves as Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Women's Concerns coordinator, helps to lead the activity.

The conference room at Harvey Hotel Addison—filled with 147 women from 12 states, Canada and Mexico—resounded with exuberant song, praise and prayer for almost the entire 48 hours the women were together.

The conference theme, "Woman, Renew Your Inner Beauty," tackled some of society's expectations of women. "The media [tries to tell] us who is beautiful and who isn't," said keynote speaker Susana Lozano, who co-pastors Rios de Agua Viva (Rivers of Living Water) Church in Matamoros, Mexico. "But beautiful women are those who have accepted Christ."

The first gathering of Hispanic Mennonite women took place in Moline in 1973. Dallas conference participants decided to hold a 25th-anniversary celebration a year late, in 1999, in the founding city. *Emily Will*

EDC delegates disagree on Confession of Faith

Quakertown, Pa.—The Eastern District Conference (EDC) of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), born amid a church split 150 years ago, may be headed for another.

Delegates to the May 2-3 EDC spring sessions, held at Camp Men-O-Lan, voted to "table for further study" a resolution on the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.* Disagreement over the document "has the potential to split the district," said one pastor.

The resolution was presented to the delegates near the close of the sessions by the "Coventry Group," a group of pastors that meets regularly for fellowship and mutual support at the Coventry Diner near Pottstown, Pa.

The resolution read, "We the delegate body of the [EDC] affirm and endorse the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as a working document for faith and life. ... We recommend this Confession with the belief that it will unite us in mission and purpose as a district, and affirm our unity with the larger Mennonite church."

An issue related to the Confession of Faith surfaced early in the meeting, when Viola Weidner, a member of First Mennonite Church, Allentown, Pa., told the delegates that while the report of the EDC ministerial committee included the fact that First Mennonite's pastor, Joe Kotva (part of the

Coventry Group), had been interviewed in pre-paration for ordination, it did not state that he had been rejected, despite being previously licensed by the district.

"We, the Allentown church family, feel like we are being shunned by the EDC," said Weidner.

Bob Gerhart, pastor at Hereford Mennonite Church, Bally, Pa., and chair of the ministerial committee, said the rejection was "not of Joe personally but asking for compliance, submission and wholehearted agreement on the minimum standard for ministers. His views on doctrine [specifically infallibility of Scripture and the Trinity] are not acceptable in accordance with our constitution and church polity."

The ministerial committee recognizes the authority of a brief statement of faith contained in the EDC constitution but questions that of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. A vote by the delegate body in favor of the Coventry Group's resolution would have meant the Confession of Faith would also be an acceptable standard to use in licensing and ordination of EDC pastors. Kotva has stated his support for the Confession.

Jim S. Amstutz, pastor at West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, made the motion to approve the Coventry Group's resolution. He then told a story about earlier having helped push a van belonging to Lynn Roth, Mennonite Central Committee East Coast director, out of the mud, with the aid of Darrell Wallace, pastor at Second Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, and Evan Gehman from Indian Valley Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

"Here we had an established rural congregation (West Swamp), an inner-city congregation (Second) and a church plant (Indian Valley) working together to help MCC, the one thing on which we all agree," Amstutz said. "I wish we could all pull together as a district to get us moving along. We're stuck—we're spinning our wheels. We're slipping behind the times because we haven't been able to focus on the Confession of Faith like the rest of the church.

"The best minds in the Mennonite church worked on the Confession. Its

Franconia keeps Germantown

Perkasie, Pa.—Delegates to the Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church have decided not to remove Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia from membership in the conference.

At the Franconia spring assembly at Deep Run Mennonite Church East on April 26, 55 percent of the delegates said in a straw vote that they were not ready to vote on a recommendation to "recognize the Germantown Mennonite Church as not being in full fellowship with Franconia Conference." The recommendation would have terminated Germantown's membership in Franconia and removed the credentials of Germantown ministers at the end of 1997.

Germantown, dually-affiliated with Eastern District Conference, has accepted into membership individuals living in committed same-sex relationships. It remains a nonvoting associate member of Franconia.

In April 1995, Germantown was reduced to associate membership and told to give up its acceptance of noncelibate homosexuals as members or face possible further action. That decision now stands by default—"until we have some further clarification of direction," says moderator Donella Clemens.

During delegate cluster meetings a month earlier, "there was a call for greater distance than what [associate] 'membership' seemed to imply," says Clemens.

At the assembly, however, the tide shifted from the calls for more punitive measures issued in delegate clusters to appeals that removing Germantown could "destroy the conference" and "damage the peace witness of the Mennonite Church."

Germantown pastor James Derstine said after the assembly that he was thankful for the "reprieve" but realizes that it is "not a final solution—not a permanent kind of healing within the conference."

Franconia delegates also decided in a straw vote not to put more energy into issues of homosexuality and the church. *Valerie Weaver*

The average American buys 17 yards of dental floss a year, says *Health*. If the average American were to floss every day, he or she would buy 182 yards a year. (*Wichita Eagle*)

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The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center at Bluffton (Ohio) College celebrated its 10th anniversary April 21-27. Activities included a literature workshop, a birthday party for children and a duck race, in which about 1,000 sunglasses-wearing rubber ducks floated down Little Riley Creek.

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The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) has given final approval to the master of arts in education degree at Bluffton (Ohio) College. The program started in 1995 following preliminary approval by the Ohio Board of Regents and NCA. Seventeen students—the first graduating class—were expected to receive degrees on May 25.

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Broad sectors of the Catholic church—laity, religious and theologians—in El Salvador are protesting the promotion of Salvadoran Archbishop Fernando Saenz Lacalle to the rank of brigadier general of the Salvadoran armed forces. During the 12-year civil war in El Salvador, the military was responsible for human rights abuses, including torture, massacre of civilians and the killing of countless lay church workers as well as priests, nuns and Archbishop Oscar Romero. Various protests questioned the generous salary and benefits that accompany Saenz's promotion in the face of widespread poverty in El Salvador, and have pointed out the confusion between Saenz's role as church leader and military leader, noting that the archdiocese under Saenz's predecessors, who included Romero, "remained at all times free and independent of both the civilian and military powers." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

According to Project Censored, a media watch group, the No. 1 unreported story of 1996 was "Risking the World: Nuclear Proliferation in Space" (*CovertAction Quarterly*, Summer 1996). The story concerned the scheduled 1997 launch of a space probe carrying 72 pounds of plutonium-238, by a kind of rocket that has had a series of mishaps in the recent past. If the probe should accidentally enter the earth's atmosphere, it could burn up and disperse the plutonium across the planet. The No. 2 story was "Shell's Oil, Africa's Blood," which documented evidence that Shell encouraged Nigerian military action against Ogoni activists who were protesting Royal Dutch/Shell's environmental devastation in their homeland. Nine members of the Ogoni tribe were executed, including Nobel Prize winner Ken Saro-Wiwa. A pamphlet listing the top 25 unreported stories of 1996 is available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Project Censored, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA 94928-3609. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Forty-five families in "Little Haiti," a poor neighborhood in Miami, now own homes because of the work of Little Haiti Housing Association. Mennonite Central Committee workers have been involved in LHHA from the ground up. The nonprofit housing agency celebrated its 10th anniversary on March 21. The poverty rate for Little Haiti is 45.6 percent, significantly higher than the citywide average and three to five times the rate of the state as a whole. LHHA provides numerous services—landlord-tenant mediation, housing rehabilitation and construction, budget and credit counseling and home-ownership preparation classes. All classes are taught in Haitian Creole. A new initiative is a "home owners' club" for families who have bought homes through LHHA. Members work for positive change in their neighborhood and act as mentors for other potential community leaders. Currently, 50 percent of the LHHA board is made up of Little Haiti residents. (*Samuel Diller*)

language is deliberately biblical, not creedal. It doesn't supersede previous confessions but builds on them. It was overwhelmingly approved by the delegates at Wichita '95."

Jerry O'Connell, pastor at Richfield (Pa.) Mennonite Church, followed Amstutz with a motion to table the resolution for further study.

"I want the delegate body to know what's involved in even saying 'table for discussion,'" said Kotva. "This document was in process for seven years. Every congregation had a chance to respond to it. We need to ask our pastors why it took so long [to express their opposition]."

"We cannot keep God from speaking no matter how much we argue over the words."

Joyce Shutt

"I have very definite concerns about the wording and content [of the Confession]," said Gerhart.

Rosie Epp, co-pastor at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., made an addendum to O'Connell's motion: "that we choose two members from the Coventry Group and two members from the [EDC] business administration committee to set up a forum to study the confession, with an outside person to moderate the discussion."

Steve Strunk, pastor at Church of the Good Samaritans, Holland, Pa., said, "I understood that there was already a forum [organized by the ministerial committee] for further study. Why shouldn't [the committee] be involved?"

"If you [ministerial committee] organize the forum, we won't come," said Kotva, referring to the Coventry Group. "In these kinds of settings, some people are allowed to dominate the discussion. The delegate body needs to know how fracturing this issue is. We honestly believe we will not be heard [in a ministerial committee-organized forum]."

Joyce Shutt, pastor at Fairfield (Pa.) Mennonite Church, said, "We are a diverse body. Under the lordship of Christ, there is room for differences, and there's a way we can stand together and support each other because we all love Christ.

"My hope is that we can come to see how much we need each other," she said. "Bob [referring to Gerhart], you balance me out, give me stability when I tend to go too far over in one direction. When we nitpick over this word and that word, we lose the balance.

"If I choose different words to express my faith, it's still just as valid as anyone else's. We cannot keep God from speaking no matter how much we argue over the words."

The delegates voted 114-113 against Epp's addendum to the motion to table and 127-90 in favor of O'Connell's motion to table the resolution for further study (to be organized by the ministerial committee).

Delegates also passed a budget of $220,450 for 1997-98, and enjoyed special music from co-host congregation Second Mennonite, Philadelphia, and a sample of Bible memory work by children from the Crossroads Community Center in Philadelphia. They received a progress report on plans for Philadelphia Mennonite High School, a joint project that EDC supports.

They heard two presentations by Hugh Sprunger, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., and staff for the GC Commission on Home Ministries. Sprunger spoke on "Voluntary Service as a Mission."

Throughout the sessions, delegates and visitors were reminded that 1997 is the sesquicentennial year for EDC. The conference dates its existence to the so-called "Oberholtzer Division" of 1847, when followers of John H. Oberholtzer dissented from what is now Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church over "plain" dress for ministers, keeping written minutes of conference proceedings and adopting a written constitution (*Ordnung*) to govern conference faith and practice (the dissenters favored the latter two).

At the very end of the 1997 EDC sessions, Gerhart told a story of how, in 1847, Franconia Conference ministers and leaders "banned" the dissenters, who, when they found out about the action some years later, then "returned the ban."

Gerhart, his voice cracking with emotion, made a resolution "to make a symbolic gesture [to Franconia] and withdraw the [EDC] ban, asking for forgiveness for whatever hurt may have resulted."

"I think it's a beautiful resolution and I support it," said Shutt. The resolution passed unanimously.
Melanie A. Zuercher

Mennonites weather Red River flooding

Newton, Kan.—The Red River flood has surged through North Dakota, southern Manitoba and the floodway around Winnipeg, and Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) is preparing for the soggy devastation left behind.

Following area visits by MDS representatives on April 26, MDS has established a base at Fargo, N.D., in Fargo-Moorhead Faith Mennonite Church. Project leaders arrived April 29 to direct the clean-up of flood-damaged homes.

MDS held an April 28 meeting to discuss short- and long-term response in Manitoba. At that time virtually the entire Red River Valley leading up to Winnipeg—about 25,000 people—had been evacuated. Included in the region are Morris, Rosenort and Niverville, home to eight Mennonite congregations and at least one Hutterite colony.

Despite the mandatory evacuation, not everyone had left.

"I'm looking out at several miles of whitecaps in every direction," said Menno Kroeker, pastor at Rosenort Evangelical Mennonite Church, on April 28 as high winds whipped up the flood waters around his house.

He said the water level was within six inches of the door and that three inches of water covered his church's main floor.

At nearby Morris, located on the Red River about 40 miles south of Winnipeg, the river was 39 feet above normal on April 28 and expected to rise another two feet.

Abe Ens, director of MDS Region V, which includes all of Canada, flew over areas of southern Manitoba April 27. He said the river, normally about 200 feet wide, had spread across miles of flat farmland.

Ens and Wilbur Litwiller, MDS Region III assistant director, flew over the flood-affected areas of North Dakota on April 26 and reported many houses standing in water, some up to the roof. Smaller communities and individual farms between Fargo and Grand Forks were totally inundated with flood waters.

Complicating the situation were pollutants in the water, including diesel fuel, gasoline, fertilizers, raw sewage and carcasses of livestock.

Winnipeggers prepared for the high water, frantically building dikes and moving belongings to higher ground. While a system of canals, known as the floodway, diverted much of the water around the city, several thousand were evacuated. The river was predicted to crest at 25 feet over normal on May 5.

Those not threatened responded to those who were. In Steinbach and Winkler, located outside the flood zone, community efforts included sandbagging, soup kitchens and housing evacuees.

Many of Winnipeg's 42 Mennonite congregations also went into action. Mennonite Central Committee Canada's office in Winnipeg gave employees two days off with pay to help sandbag.

Upstream, local MDS units in North and South Dakota have begun helping to clean up where the water has receded. MDS volunteers in the Dakotas and Manitoba also assisted in sandbagging efforts. *Rich Preheim, associate editor of* Mennonite Weekly Review, *with Pearl Sensenig for MDS*

Active Canadian churchman dies

Winnipeg—Rudy A. Regehr, long a central figure in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC), serving first at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) and then as executive secretary of Congregational Resources Board (1981-1993), died April 11. He was 66.

Rudy was born in 1930 in Chinook, Alta. He and Anne Boese were married June 1, 1957. They were founding members of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

Rudy graduated from CMBC in 1962 and immediately began working as CMBC public relations director. In 1968 he moved into the position of registrar, where he stayed until 1981.

From there, he became executive secretary of the then Congregational Resources Board of the CMC. He remained there until olivopontocerebellar atrophy (a rare disease that attacks the stem of the brain and shuts down the muscles, much like multiple sclerosis) forced him into retirement in 1993.

He spent his last months in the hospital, where he was admitted in August 1996. He is survived by his wife, four children, and their families. *Roma Quapp*

The top six "de-motivators" in the workplace, says Dean Spitzer, author of *Supermotivation*, are office politics, unclear expectations, poorly designed work, hypocrisy, being taken for granted and being forced to do poor quality work. (*The Marketplace*)

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Hopi Mission School was able to collect 906,606 Campbell's soup labels in 1996, largely with the assistance of Mennonite churches across the country. The school will receive a minivan, P.A. equipment and a projection screen. For information on collecting labels for the school, write Hopi Mission School, P.O. Box 39, Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039-0039.

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When John and Marilyn Bender started Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church 11 years ago, they looked for a community where they could put their faith to work. In 1994, they found Freddy and Helen Johnson in the neighborhood of the Halifax Court public housing project. The Johnsons had sold their successful building company, expensive home and three BMWs, traded in a "harried, empty" life and started Building Together, a nonprofit organization with a mission of building affordable housing and finding jobs for people in the Halifax Court complex. Building Together was headquartered in an abandoned school building in the Halifax Court neighborhood, and the congregation began meeting in the auditorium. Raleigh Mennonite has nearly doubled in size, from 70 to 130 people on a Sunday morning. Last fall, Jubilee Peace Center, a ministry of Raleigh Mennonite, held a nonviolent toy exchange at Halifax Court and distributed brochures that suggested ways families can teach children alternatives to violence. Raleigh Mennonite was featured, along with Building Together and the "return flight" movement the Johnsons started, in a front-page story in the March 23, 1997, issue of the Raleigh *News and Observer*. (*The News and Observer, WMSC Voice*)

Goshen (Ind.) College unveiled a spiritual symbol April 5 to mark the inauguration of a new president later that day. About 150 people braved rainy weather to dedicate Meditation Garden along the Elkhart River near the college cabin. The garden will include a wall that alumni and friends were invited to build with stones brought to the ceremony or sent by mail. Stones came from new president Shirley H. Showalter's childhood home in Lititz, Pa., the Berlin Wall, Israel and several Study-Service Term locations. Earlier in the week, on April 3, classes were canceled and offices closed in the afternoon so students, faculty and staff could participate in community service projects, one of which was building a Habitat for Humanity house from the ground up. Showalter succeeds interim president Henry Weaver and Victor Stoltzfus, who retired in 1996 after 13 years as GC president. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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By a 73 percent vote, delegates at the annual meeting of the Mennonite Church's Illinois Conference voted April 5 to place two congregations under discipline. The two, Oak Park (Ill.) Mennonite Church and Maple Avenue Mennonite Church, Waukesha, Wis., both dually affiliated with Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, admit practicing homosexuals as members in violation of the Illinois Conference constitution. In order to place the congregations under discipline, the delegates had to first approve a constitutional change allowing levels of discipline in addition to expulsion, the only level in the previous constitution. Under discipline, the two congregations will not have normal voting privileges and may lose any conference subsidy and the opportunity for members to serve on conference commissions. A year ago a motion to expel the congregations failed by a narrow margin. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

From solo to chorus of concern

Howard Zehr

This young Laotian woman is transplanting rice seedlings despite the fact that unexploded cluster bombs buried in fields continue to make farming dangerous in many parts of Laos. Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) once lonely voice on the problem has swelled into a chorus of concern and action, including from the U.S. military responsible for the carnage in the first place: U.S. forces dropped 2 million tons of bombs, many designed not to explode on impact, on Laos during the Vietnam War.

At the end of 1995, the United Nations established a trust fund for de-mining in Laos. In May 1996 the U.S. government began providing equipment, vehicles and technical staff to train Laotians—to date, 150 as de-miners and 32 as community awareness staff. Eight countries have now pledged a total of more than $7 million U.S. to the fund.

Many credit MCC's advocacy, de-mining experiments and three-year bomb removal project for leading the way. MCC workers were among the first Westerners to live and work in post-war Laos in 1975. They soon learned of the anti-personnel cluster bomblets, known in Laos as "bombies," that continued to kill and to keep fearful villagers from farming some land. Through persistent, pioneering efforts, MCC became known for its commitment to disarming cluster bombs.

In 1994, MCC embarked on a three-year collaboration with Mines Advisory Group to train de-miners in Xieng Khouang Province. The partnership ended in June 1996 when it became clear that Mines Advisory Group was able to attract financial support from larger organizations. Mines Advisory Group continues to train de-miners and now most of the clearing work is being done by Laotians. Today MCC is focusing on assisting bombie victims and preventing accidents through educational efforts. *Pearl Sensenig*

Court ruling keeps Colombia seminary open

Editor's note: *The following is a joint release of Mennonite Central Committee, the Colombia Mennonite Church, Mennonite World Conference and the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO).*

Akron, Pa.—A Mennonite seminary in Colombia will remain open, at least for now, thanks to international support and a recent court ruling.

On April 25, a Bogota court closed the legal case against the Mennonite Biblical Seminary there, ruling that the seminary may stay open and need not be registered with the municipal office of education.

Several months ago Colombian military and government officials tried to close the seminary, which offers the "Hacedores de Paz" (Peacemakers) program as an alternative to military service for conscientious objectors. Some 70 youth participate in the program. Colombian law exempts youth enrolled in seminary from military service.

Late last fall, the Colombian government denied the exemption to the Mennonite seminary students, saying the seminary was not registered. With the recent ruling, Colombian Mennonites can once again request conscientious objection deferrals from the armed forces for the students.

"It's likely that this isn't the last round, but for now we're not feeling harassed or threatened," says Peter Stucky, pastor of the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church in Bogota and vice president of the Colombian Mennonite Conference.

High profile: In fact, Stucky says, the case has given conscientious objection and the Colombia Mennonite Church a high profile in the Colombian media—and even internationally—over the past few weeks. For example, Cable News Network (CNN) ran a report on the seminary's struggles on one of its Spanish-language programs.

"The preponderance of the coverage has been sympathetic or at least even-handed, only occasionally not very favorable," Stucky says.

He expressed thanks on behalf of Colombian Mennonites to all those who supported the church and the seminary with prayers and letters in response to the church's appeal for action in support of the seminary.

This, along with Colombian Mennonites' ongoing efforts to keep the seminary open, seems to have proved a powerful force in convincing various government officials to talk with Colombian Mennonites face to face.

Mennonites from around the world wrote hundreds of letters and e-mail messages urging that the seminary remain open.

"The response from the international community helped convince the Colombian government that the seminary should be allowed to continue to operate," says Glendon Klaassen, executive secretary of the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church. "Colombian Mennonites are saying this had a direct bearing on the court's decision. We are thankful for this development and praise God for it."
Emily Will

Rosthern Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Sask., invites applications for a full-time **youth pastor**. The position requires a mature, enthusiastic person who indicates a strong Christian faith and who can relate to youth in the church and community. Bible college graduate preferred.

Resumes should be mailed **by June 1** to **Search Committee, Box 519, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0**.

Executive director: Thurston Woods Village, Sturgis, Mich., has an immediate opening for an executive director of a Mennonite-sponsored retirement community. The individual will oversee current and future housing, health care and supportive services. Prerequisites include a Nursing Home Administrators License, a minimum of five years professional leadership experience and a master's degree in health care preferred. The successful candidate will be committed to Christian ministry, identify with and support the mission, goals and values of Thurston Woods Village and possess strong management, interpersonal and communication skills.

Thurston Woods Village is a nonprofit Christian retirement community with 118 skilled-care nursing beds, 82 assisted living units and 33 HUD apartments, and $6 million annual budget. There are 120 full-time equivalent employees.

Send resume, salary history and references to **J. Randall King, 27440 Banker Street Road, Sturgis, MI 49091-9357; fax (616) 489-2491.**

Derksens remain in Zaire for now

On May 13, the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa, Zaire, upgraded the alert to all Americans except essential embassy personnel to leave the country. Marilyn Derksen, Commission on Overseas Mission worker in Kinshasa with her husband, Rick, through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, told Leona Schrag of AIMM that a "Dead City" (everyone stay home) strike had been called for the next three days with the expectation that rebel leader Laurent Kabila's forces would march into Kinshasa in that time.

Schrag said the Derksens still did not feel this was the time for them to leave. When Schrag asked Marilyn what was keeping the family in Zaire now that school is out, she said that sometimes people don't understand that "we live in Zaire and are not just here for a job." Zairians check on them daily, she said.

The Spirituality Reference Council, a joint effort of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, met March 23-25 in Winnipeg. This group meets annually to "take the pulse" of spiritual health in Mennonite congregations in North America. The council received a report on continuing strong use of Advent and Lent/Holy Week worship and spirituality resources. Congregations ordered 470 copies of the 1997 Lent/Holy Week materials. The council also took action to develop a database of Mennonite spiritual directors who can provide one-on-one mentoring for pastors and other spiritual leaders, and approved a pilot project to establish congregational mentoring of young adults between the time they leave their home congregations and begin to relate to another church in a new context. (*Marlene Kropf*)

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First Mennonite Church of Bluffton (Ohio) held a retreat recently—in a prison. Pam Nath, a First Mennonite attender who teaches at Bluffton College, arranged for 50 members to spend 3 1/2 days at the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville with 42 inmates approved for participation by the prison chaplain. There was Bible study, prayer, singing and recreation. In addition, participants—six inmates to three church members—spent a lot of time at tables, eating some of the 170 dozen cookies baked by church members, off placemats made by children in First Mennonite's Venture clubs, and talking and listening to each other. Nath said, "The women [inmates] were overwhelmed with the numerous expressions of love shown in cookies, prayers and notes of friendship [written by church members to accompany the cookies]." Team members have structured monthly "follow-up" sessions with retreat participants. (*Central District Reporter*)

Record

MCC—Mennonite Central Committee

"Peacemaking: The Power of Nonviolence," a conference on activism and contemplation, is scheduled for June 9-11 in San Francisco. The Dalai Lama and Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala, 1995 Nobel Peace Prize winner, will be at the conference, which is sponsored by the Tibet House. Call 1-800-937-8728 or e-mail 104376.3277@compuserve.com.

• • •

Palestinians Imad Mohammed Shawer, 19, and Mamdoh Abed Al Asam Zaatary, 19, were released April 17 after being imprisoned in a Hebron jail for 13 days. Shawer and Zaatary were arrested March 28 with Christian Peacemaker Teams Hebron member Cliff Kindy and Rabbi Arik Asherman at a public witness of rebuilding a Palestinian home that was demolished over one year ago. Shawer and Zaatary each paid a $50 fine before being released.

• • •

About 40 Mennonites and 40 Jews gathered April 6 at the University of Maryland for a conference called "Mennonites and Jews: Religious Minorities and the Search for Identity in America." Eight historians—Mennonites and Jews—probed their own heritage and engaged in vigorous discussion with the audience. Conference planners were Kimberly D. Schmidt, Hasia Diner and Marsha Rosenblit. Schmidt had been Diner's student at Maryland. Diner had a major presentation at the "Anabaptist Women: The Quiet in the Land?" conference in Pennsylvania in 1995. Rosenblit is associate director of the Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, which sponsored the conference. (*Anna Juhnke*)

MINISTERS

Edwin Epp was installed as pastor at Sargent Avenue Church, Winnipeg, Feb. 23.

Kerry Saner will be interim youth pastor at Trinity Church, Hillsboro, Kan., beginning in July.

Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau was ordained May 18 as associate pastor at Eighth Street Church, Goshen, Ind.

Magdalena Widjaja was ordained March 9 as pastor at Grace Chinese Fellowship, Regina, Sask.

WORKERS

Robert Blough is one of Bluffton (Ohio) College's Outstanding Alumni for 1997.

Chris Buhler, Stirling Avenue Church, Kitchener, Ont., is staff for the Peace, Justice and Social Concerns Committee of Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada.

Bev Dyck, Winkler (Man.) Bergthaler Church, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Port Hardy, B.C., as a school counselor.

Amal Friesen is outdoor education coordinator at Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich.

Anna Kreider Juhnke, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., is one of Bluffton (Ohio) College's Outstanding Alumni for 1997.

Kathleen Kern, First Church, Bluffton, Ohio, and Rochester (N.Y.) Area Fellowship, is one of Bluffton (Ohio) College's Outstanding Alumni for 1997.

Melanie Neufeld, Bethel Church, Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Winnipeg, working at peace/mediation and as volunteer coordinator at the Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba.

Robert Nickel, Fort Garry Fellowship, Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Winnipeg in public relations and as office coordinator for the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies.

Lori Hildebrandt Penner, First Church, Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Winnipeg as an administrative assistant with Mediation Services.

Lee Pfahler, Silverwood Church, Goshen, Ind., is beginning a two-year MCC term in Goshen as the material resource program coordinator.

Rebecca Stahly, Bethel Church, Lancaster, Pa., is beginning a two-year MCC term in Akron, Pa., as an administrative secretary.

Kim van Donk, Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., is beginning a two-year MCC term in Akron, Pa., as an administrative assistant in the personnel department.

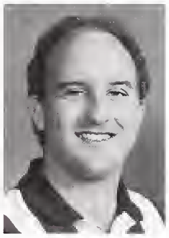
Amy and **Eric Zuercher**, Shalom Fellowship, Tucson, Ariz., are beginning three-year MCC terms in Sulawesi, Indonesia, Amy as a nurse, Eric in appropriate technology.

Dyck

Neufeld

Nickel

Penner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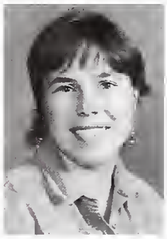
van Donk

A. Zuercher

E. Zuercher

Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a **science/Bible instructor**. Applicant must have coaching experience. Teaching responsibilities include: physical science, general biology, advanced biology, physics, chemistry and one Bible class. Salary range: $19,200-$29,300 (competitive with most South Dakota public schools). Coaching responsibilities: varsity girls basketball, co-ed track and possibly assistant boys basketball.

Send resume to **Freeman Academy, Attn. Larry Horner, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029.**

Two one-third-time coaching positions: One in track and field and one in women's softball. Master's degree preferred. Must be familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite faith understanding. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Send letter of application, resume, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to **William Hawk, Vice President and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.** AAEOE

Teaching positions, New Danville Mennonite School, 393 Long Lane, Lancaster, PA 17603. Openings for special education, fifth grade and half-time kindergarten teachers.

Contact **Carl A. Hess, (717) 872-2506**.

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Quakertown Christian School has an open position for a full-time **director of development**. Opportunity for creative person with people skills.

Send resume to **Mark Swartley, 143 Rocky Ridge Road, Quakertown, PA 18951.**

Director of pastoral care/chaplain sought for **Prairie View**, a regional behavioral and mental health system established in 1954 by the Mennonite churches and guided by a strong tradition of Christian caring. M.Div., 2 units CPE, denominational endorsement/ordination with MSW or master's clinical degree and experience in mental health and church ministry desired. Experience in crisis ministry helpful. Position to develop pastoral and congregational relationships re behavioral and mental health issues, direct pastoral care to patients and families, plan spiritual programming and provide pastoral care for staff.

Submit resume to **Yvonne Sieber, Vice President Human Resources, Prairie View, Inc.,** Box 467, **Newton, KS 67114-0467;** fax **(316) 284-6491;** e-mail **yms@pvi.org**. EOE

Hopi Mission School is seeking a **school administrator** to assume duties beginning July 1997. The applicant should have a bachelor's degree with teaching/administrative experience and missionary awareness. Hopi Mission School is located in northern Arizona on the Hopi Reservation. The school serves approximately 50 students in grades K-6. The school is affiliated with the Mennonites and the American Baptists.

Application/resume should be sent to **Hopi Mission School, P.O. Box 39, Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039; (520) 734-2453.**

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following positions open for the 1997-98 school year: **English instructor; social studies/Bible instructor; director of food services; orchestra/band director** (25 percent).

Send resumes or inquiries to **Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Faith & Life Press,
publisher for the General Conference Mennonite Church, invites applications for the position of

editorial director

We seek an individual to provide editorial services and oversight for the development and production of Faith & Life Press products. This person will manage the Editorial Division, serve on Management Team and report to the director of operations. Responsibilities include new product development; recruiting authors, illustrators and manuscripts; editing, and supervision of staff. Qualifications and desired skills include editorial experience, theological education, college degree with background in Christian education, literature, grammar, humanities and communications.

Applications accepted until position is filled. Starting date is July 15, 1997.

Address inquiries and resumes to:
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Faith & Life Press
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e-mail **dennisg@gcmc.org**

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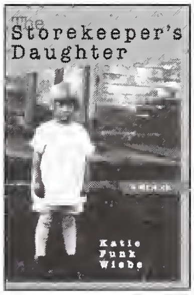

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Reviews

FILMS

SMILLA'S SENSE OF SELF

Smilla's Sense of Snow, *written by Ann Biderman, produced by Bernd Eichinger and Martin Moszkowicz, directed by Bille August, rated R*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

When I read the Peter Hoeg novel on which this movie is based, I was impressed by how well a man did with his characterization of a woman. Yet there was something that brought the novel up short of being a "keeper."

After I saw the movie, I understood what it was. Apparently neither Hoeg nor whoever was responsible for the final cut of the film (director, producer or studio executives) thought that Smilla herself was enough to carry the story. So he/they had to add the obligatory blood and gore, the "cops-and-robbers," and an enormous explosion at the end.

So, yes, the movie follows the book quite faithfully. Smilla Jasperson (Julia Ormond) lived with her Inuit mother in Greenland until she was 6. One day, her mother went out hunting and never came back. Smilla was forced to go and live with her American father in Denmark. Now, as an adult in Copenhagen, all Smilla cares about are ice and mathematics, the only two things whose facets and possibilities she believes can never be exhausted.

A small Inuit boy, Isaiah, enters her life despite her attempts, through rudeness, to discourage him. Smilla starts to recall the long-forgotten lessons of her mother: what it's like to care and be cared for. Then one day Isaiah is found dead on the sidewalk, supposedly from falling off the six-story roof of the building where both he and Smilla live. But Smilla knows that Isaiah was terrified of heights and would have gone up on the roof only under the most extreme provocation.

Smilla believes Isaiah was murdered and she sets out to prove it, unwillingly enlisting the help of her father, Moritz (Robert Loggia), and a neighbor, the Mechanic (Gabriel Byrne), along the way. Eventually, she gets tangled in a bizarre plot involving prehistoric parasites and a live meteor somewhere in the Arctic wilderness.

Twentieth Century Fox

Gabriel Byrne and Julia Ormond

Snow is a metaphor for Smilla's landscape of herself—untouchably clean, complex almost beyond human understanding, coldly and irrevocably deadly to all but the hardiest.

Smilla is a mesmerizing character, and Julia Ormond gives a performance equal to the challenge. The first two-thirds of the movie are riveting, alternating between the unfolding layers of the mystery and of Smilla herself.

The story nearly disappears in the frantic pace of the end, but the movie is worth seeing for Ormond's performance alone and for the vast Arctic landscapes that speak also of the lonely terrain of the human heart.

BOOKS

STUCK IN THEORY

Parenting the Prodigal *by S. Rutherford McDill Jr. (Herald Press, 1996, 120 pages, $7.95 U.S./$11.35 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Joyce M. Shutt, Orrtanna, Pa.

Parenting the Prodigal was written to help parents reclaim their lives and focus in the midst of the family hurt and stress that is inevitable when living with a prodigal, that is, a child who leaves home physically and/or emotionally, joins the wrong crowd and brings pain to his parents.

A forensic/clinical psychologist, father of three, and a veteran of many years in practice with both the California Corrections Department and private work, McDill brings a lot of experience and insight to this book. Yet he never seems able to connect with his reader or to move beyond the theoretical (at least, this was the case for me and several mothers of prodigals with whom I shared the book).

McDill turns thumbs down on tough love and assumes a high level of maturity, insight and self-control on the part of the prodigal's parents. He is strong on the "shoulds." It is obvious from the case studies he quotes that he was able to help the parents of prodi-

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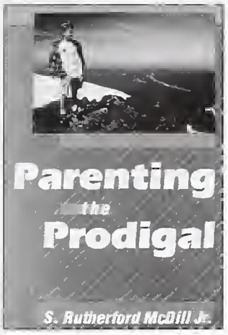


gals with whom he worked to move from an acute state of dysfunction and guilt to a place where they could "keep the door open, the porch light lit, the prodigal's bed turned down, and the pillow fluffed with a chocolate mint lovingly placed upon it." Yet these essential steps are exactly what is missing in the book.

The best audience for *Parenting the Prodigal* will be parents who are already doing a good job, or those whose children have not yet embarked down that slippery slope of prodigality. Good parents need lots of reinforcement these days. It would also make a good resource for pastoral counselors and for parenting and Sunday school classes where discussion and sharing can fill in the gaps.

PICKING WHAT WORKS

Peaceful Parenting in a Violent World *by Joseph N. Cress and Burt Berlowe (Perspective Press, 1995, 275 pages, $14.95 U.S.)*

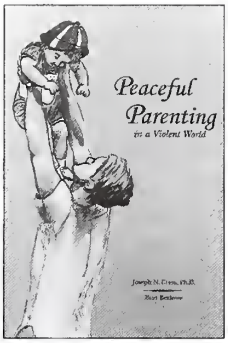
Reviewed by Amy Dueckman, Abbotsford, B.C.

What's your parenting style: permissive, authoritarian or somewhere in between? How should sibling fighting be dealt with? Is spanking ever a good idea?

Parenting has always been a tough job but may have seemed less complicated when the only choice was "spare the rod and spoil the child." Today's parents have so many more options, and books on child-rearing abound. The more we read, the more confused we may become.

The authors of this book outline various parenting styles and philosophies but don't advocate one that will fit all families. Parents' personalities and children's temperaments are taken into consideration in a "pick the method that works for you" approach. For example, with a child who has a problem with swearing, various solutions listed include totally ignoring the bad language; imposing a monetary fine for every swearword spoken; asking children to repeat the word over and over, then giving no response (to reduce the hoped-for shock value); establishing no-swearing zones in the house, or encouraging the child to find alternative words for the offending word.

This book was not quite what I expected from the title. For a lifelong Mennonite, the much-used word "peace" takes on a certain connotation. My first assumption was that the book was primarily about teaching nonviolence to children, e.g., choosing nonaggressive toys and entertainment, alternatives to corporal punishment and educating about international conflict. These were covered in an excellent chapter entitled "Beyond Nonviolence."



Instead, this book proved to be a more general book on raising children but with the underlying philosophy that effective child management, or "peaceful parenting," is a multifaceted approach that must take into account interpersonal relationships in the home and community.

Though not written from a Christian perspective, many suggestions in this book will appeal to Christian families who believe that both parents and children are valuable human beings deserving mutual respect.

Resources

- **MCC 1996 in Review** is a nine-minute video showing MCC highlights for that year. Available free from Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; or your local MCC office.
- **Activist Guide: Speaking for Conscience** is a new guide to assist those working for passage of the U.S. Peace Tax Fund bill. Available for $12.95 U.S. postpaid from National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, 2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington, DC 20008.
- **A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue** by Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk (Herald Press, 1997, $14.99 U.S./$21.50 Cdn.) addresses similarities and differences of the two religions in a dialogue between friends.
- **Little Foxes That Spoil the Vines** by W. Barry Miller (Herald Press, 1997, $6.99 U.S./$9.95 Cdn.) reflects on things in life that ruin relationships with God, others and ourselves.
- **Guns and the Lives They Leave Holes In** is a video produced by high school students for ages 10 and up. It looks at the impact of guns on their friends, families and community. Available from Peace Resource Center, Pyle Center, Box 1183, Wilmington, OH 45177.
- **Ita Ford: Missionary Martyr** by Phyllis Zagano (Paulist Press, 1996, $5.95 U.S.) is the story of Ford, one of four American churchwomen murdered in El Salvador in 1980.
- **No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church** by Ron Klassen and John Koessler (Baker Books, 1996, $10.99 U.S.) shows how to develop ministries and leadership in small-town settings.
- **Christian Missions & the Judgment of God, second edition** by David Macdonald Paton (Eerdmans, 1996, $13 U.S.) is a re-release of Paton's 1953 missiology book. This edition includes a biographical section on Paton's life.
- **Without Keys: My 15 Weeks with the Street People** by Pat McDonough (Terra Sancta Press, 1996, $24 U.S. paper) shows, through the author's journal entries, real people caught in unfortunate circumstances.
- **Black & White Together: The Search for Common Ground** by Danny Duncan Collum (Orbis, 1996, $14 U.S.) contains stories of black and white Americans uniting in a common cause, from colonial times to the present.
- **Testing the Medical Covenant: Active Euthanasia and Health Care Reform** by William F. May (Eerdmans, 1996, $14 U.S.) explores the pros and cons of these two issues.
- **New Living Translation Bible** (Tyndale House, 1996, $19.99 U.S. hardcover), a revision of The Living Bible, is a dynamic-equivalence translation instead of a paraphrase, combining scholarship with readability.

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Editorial

We are all catholic

When Jesus prayed "that they may all be one" (John 17:21), I doubt he had in mind either the Roman Catholic Church or the Mennonite church. Nevertheless, we dare not lose sight of the unity our Lord wished for among his followers.

Over the centuries many different churches have developed as Christians have come to express their discipleship in a variety of ways. A part of being faithful followers of Jesus involves relating to and learning from Christians of other communions. Otherwise, we spurn Jesus' prayer.

Given the Anabaptist history of being persecuted by the Catholic Church, it is no small thing to look at how Mennonites can relate to and learn from Catholics. Deep in the collective psyche of Mennonites is a resistance to such ecumenical overtures. They smack of capitulation, watering down the true faith, becoming impure.

Such resistance can be a sign of pride. How ironic that the sin Mennonites have often most abhorred may be the one we are most tempted by! Our desires to be "separated from the world" and to be "faithful to the Word" are laudable. But they can also mask a pride that says we're better than everyone else, somehow closer to God.

> *The kind of unity that Jesus prayed for does not mean uniformity, but it means acknowledging that following Jesus takes many expressions.*

I've witnessed the power that our history of persecution can hold over us by seeing it disarmed. About 20 years ago I was at a meeting at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus that included many Anabaptists and a number of Catholics. During the course of the conference, the Catholics learned about the persecution that Anabaptists suffered in the 16th century from the Catholic Church. During a closing worship time they publicly asked for forgiveness. The emotions of the Mennonites and Brethren there came to the surface. Some cried. We embraced each other and shared in Communion.

That kind of healing needs to happen on a larger scale. Until we are comfortable with who we are and come to terms with the judgments we may hold against other Christians, we cannot experience the kind of unity that Jesus prayed for. That unity does not mean uniformity, but it means acknowledging that following Jesus takes many expressions.

A curious movement: In our day a curious movement is unfolding as Mennonites and Catholics come together in various ways. This issue tells the stories of two Mennonites who joined the Catholic Church. A Mennonite friend of mine recently found a peace he had long sought when he joined the Catholic Church.

I know others who grew up Catholic and later joined the Mennonite church. (I'm married to one.) Besides those experiences, Catholics have entered into dialogue with Mennonites about peace, and Mennonites have learned from the rich Catholic tradition of prayer and spirituality.

Many of us have benefited from the writings of Catholics like Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and Henri Nouwen. Others of us have used the resources of Catholic spiritual directors, retreat houses or monasteries to gain a deeper experience of God's presence in our lives.

I came across Eric Haarer after I had made arrangements to take a week-long retreat at Nada Hermitage in Colorado. The monks there welcomed me warmly and asked questions about my beliefs. I never felt pressure from them to change my beliefs and become a Catholic.

We need not convert everyone to our particular way of following Jesus. But we are bound to draw near to Jesus ourselves and invite others to do likewise. And it behooves us to learn from one another whatever is helpful.

We need to recognize that we are all "catholic" (Greek for "universal"). We all are part of the universal church that Jesus prayed would express the mysterious unity that exists in the Godhead. Let's learn from one another without fear.
Gordon Houser

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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JUNE 10, 1997

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Called to pastoral ministry

- Called to the ministry in spite of myself (page 3)
- New adventures in God's service (page 5)
- 10 ways to serve our servers (page 7)
- Pastors are human, too (page 8)

Prologue

Pastors are at the heart of congregational life, yet we often take them for granted. We even mistreat them sometimes.

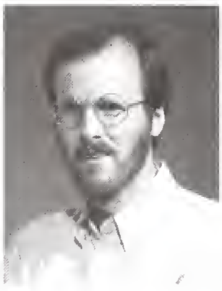
This issue looks at stories of two pastors and how they experienced their call to the ministry. Arthur Paul Boers (page 3) had no inclination to be a pastor, but God had other ideas, he writes. He is one of our pastors who grew up in another tradition and came to the Mennonite church out of his theological convictions.

Marjorie Reimer Ediger (page 5) came to the ministry late in life. For many years she served the church as a pastor's wife, but later God led her into pastoral ministry. She just retired June 1 and now lives in Denver.

Marlo M. Schalesky lists 10 ways we as church members can serve our pastors (page 7). Pick a couple and put them into practice. Ronald Krehbiel, who retired last year after 42 years in the ministry, offers his insights about how to support our pastors (page 8).

Denise Preller tackles a subject that is so important yet often controversial: how we discipline our children (page 10). She emphasizes using principles from our Mennonite faith.

Read about two Mennonite Voluntary Service workers who have become like sisters as they serve together in Dallas, Texas (page 11).



J.B. Miller raises concern about the waning of volunteerism in our churches (page 12). Is he right?

We pray you have a joyful, relaxing summer. *gh*

Next issue: World of enough

Cover: Photo by Paul M. Schrock

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Called to the ministry in spite of myself

Arthur Paul Boers

If I did not believe in providence, I might almost think my convoluted call to ministry was accidental. God called me to be a pastor … in spite of myself.

Even though he was determined not to be a pastor, the author discovered that ministry as his call.

When I was 4, I heard an overseas missionary speak and believed then that God was calling me to mission work. When I was a child in a Christian elementary school, my good speaking voice and memory meant that I often had parts in school and church programs. As a result, by grade two I was told by our pastor to consider the ministry. He repeated this suggestion when I studied catechism with him years later and showed both an interest in theology and a commitment to the spiritual life. For many years, being a pastor was a definite possibility in my mind.

To me, pastors were authority figures with all the answers. I longed to be like them and felt secure in my faith (and judgmental of those in a different place from me). When I was 20, however, my only sibling died of leukemia at the age of 17. This set off a tremendous crisis of faith for me and I struggled long and hard with God about the cruelty, senselessness and injustice of this.

As I no longer had all the answers, I thought I was disqualified from being a pastor. I had other problems with pastoring, too. I had never seen pastors model much social concern. I was also not sure that I had the necessary diplomatic skills. By the time I married at age 23, I assured my wife I would not be a pastor.

Nevertheless, I attended seminary for a degree in peace studies. (Several of my friends studying at seminary never intended to be pastors either; guess what they became?) After seminary, we moved to the inner-city of Chicago, where I tried two jobs related to peace and social justice concerns.

Mainline church: Like several Mennonites in our area, we elected not to go to another neighborhood to attend a Mennonite church. Rather we went to a local United Methodist church that was actively involved with and committed to our poor area. The small congregation was made up of older white United Methodists, young service-oriented Mennonites and poor (mostly undocumented) Mexicans. Ironically, when our landlord first pointed out this church just around the corner from our apartment, I disdainfully thought I would never attend a mainline church.

> ***Being a pastor is a potent mix of peril and privilege. ... Most of the time I cannot believe I am paid for what my soul most wants to do.***
>
> **Arthur Paul Boers**

The pastor, Martha Scott, drew me into activities and unconsciously eroded my hesitations about being a pastor. I appreciated her modeling of active involvement in social concerns. She was direct in her speech, and I believed even I could perhaps acquire diplomacy skills. Finally, in the context of the suffering and doubt of our troubled neighbors, I saw that compassion and listening were far more pastoral than having all the answers. Even so, I still did not think about being a pastor.

Martha had me preach once a month, and I liked it. One day, two friends from Ontario happened to visit on one of my sermon days. They affirmed my sermon and asked me whether I would like to be a pastor. I had not thought about this and so was surprised by my answer: "Yes, I would."

That week, with that surprise still turning in my mind, Martha asked me out for breakfast as she sometimes did. "We are expanding our pastoral staff," she said, "and want to know whether you would consider coming on board as a pastor."

"Yes, I would," I responded, amazed at the uncanny timing of that week's conversations. The congregation affirmed my preaching, my Christian commitment and my potential gifts as a leader. They also wanted me to act as a liaison to interpret Mennonites to Methodists and Mexicans and vice versa.

That church experience was a major turning point in my life and faith. During that time I also attended McCormick Theological Seminary to receive my Master of Divinity degree. When my two-year contract was finished, I felt drawn and called to minister in a Mennonite context, which I have done since 1988 in Ontario, first with mostly Russian Mennonites in a small urban church planting and for the last four years with one of the oldest Swiss Mennonite churches in Canada.

Being a pastor is a potent mix of peril and privilege. I continue to grow and learn and count this call an honor and obligation. Most of the time I cannot believe I am paid for what my soul most wants to do.

Arthur Paul Boers is pastor at Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

New adventures in God's service

After years of service as a pastor's wife and a painful divorce, the author finds renewed joy in the pastoral ministry.

Marjorie Reimer Ediger

My story of a call to pastoral ministry is strange, because I didn't see myself in that role until later in life. Earlier, as a teen, I had dedicated my life to God at a campfire service during a Mennonite youth retreat in a California mountain setting. I had thought of missionary service in some foreign country at that time. I soon headed for Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., where I majored in Bible and religious education, with a minor in music.

After graduating from Bethel, I went to Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago and took as many courses as I could while working part-time to help pay my way. I became engaged that Christmas to Peter Ediger, who was in his senior year at Bethel and who felt called to pastoral ministry rather than to foreign mission. We were married the following summer, 1951, and headed for Chicago after the wedding. He was to begin seminary and I was to continue. We debated whether we were financially able to both take classes. I decided to work a quarter, then study a quarter.

My goal now was to be the best pastor's wife I could be, and I saw this as my calling for "full-time Christian service." Peter worked at part-time jobs and during Christmas holidays, and we were happy together. As he was finishing his second year of seminary, our first child, Irene, was born. We wanted children and, even though I could not finish my degree, it didn't seem to matter. We had a beautiful little girl and were most thankful.

Our first congregational assignment was in Fresno, Calif., where we served for seven years. Then we spent about three years in Elkhart, Ind., where Peter served as field secretary for city churches. Our fourth child, Duane, was born shortly after our move, and I became a full-time mother. We enjoyed our four children and liked living in Elkhart, but we both missed the pastorate.

Racism and poverty: Our next pastorate was a one-year interim assignment at the Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago. The congregation was mostly African-American. We learned a great deal about life that year, and about inner-city living, racism and poverty.

Our next (and last) pastorate was with the Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church, where we served 22 years. It was during these later years that Peter and I seemed to grow apart. To make a long, sad story short, we divorced in 1987. Earlier, I had seen what might be ahead, and my counselor—and also Peter—encouraged me to go to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., for a January interterm.

Coming home after that month of study, I realized there was little hope for rebuilding our marriage and drove back to Elkhart for a second semester. I thank God I was able to finish the two-year master's in theological studies course, because I was permitted to transfer some of those early credits from Chicago. I graduated in May 1987.

However, I still did not feel called to the pastoral ministry. I had hospital chaplaincy in mind, and when divorce papers from Peter's lawyer arrived, I felt led to apply for a year's residency in clinical pastoral education (CPE) at Community Hospitals of Central California in Fresno. God led marvelously during this painful time in my life. I had great counselors, both in Arvada and in Elkhart. At the seminary, God gave me supportive housemates and friends. The CPE was also fulfilling and helpful. But I discovered I was not ready to become a hospital chaplain. I just didn't feel I was up to it. Before this time I had always been a "helper" and I was scared to death to apply for a position where I was supposed to be "in charge."

After a stressful year in Reedley, Calif., my hometown, working at three part-time jobs, God led me to apply with Mennonite Voluntary Service. After my struggle to make ends meet in Reedley, MVS looked inviting, and it had just the right kind of work for me in St. Catharines, Ont. It was here that my self-worth was confirmed as I worked with the Friendly Visitor Service and lived in the unit house. In St. Catharines I attended United Mennonite Church, where I felt loved and valued. I enjoyed singing in the

What a joy I felt that night. I was not afraid. I knew God was directing me and would see me through this new adventure in God's service.

Marjorie Reimer Ediger

choir and attending the women's group. The Sunday school class was also helpful. Many good people became my friends at both United and Grace Mennonite churches.

The Mennonite ministers in St. Catharines invited me to their meetings. They knew I had been licensed for ministry. I had been asked to preach a sermon in my home church before I left Reedley and had enjoyed doing that, but I still saw my gifts more in the area of visitation, especially with aging people. So when I was asked to fill the pulpit one Sunday at United Mennonite, I said yes.

Hard work: I used the same sermon I had preached at Reedley from Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." I called the sermon "Learning to Lighten Your Load," and I received good feedback from the congregation. Soon I was asked to preach at Grace Mennonite as well. Preaching was enjoyable, but preparing the sermon was hard work, and I wondered how ministers could prepare a sermon every week. I appreciated my former husband's work in a new way.

During my second year in MVS, I thought about what God might be calling me to do. I was still committed to follow the leading of the Lord. Since I was a member of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary board, I traveled to Elkhart, Ind., from time to time. John A. Esau, director of the General Conference's Ministerial Leadership Services, planned to be at one of those meetings, and I made an appointment with him to talk about my future.

I was beginning to think of the possibility of becoming a pastor, but I didn't know if I could do it. Anyway, who would hire a 63-year-old divorced woman? I wondered if there might be some kind of apprenticeship program I could get into. But John didn't think there was any such opening suitable for me. Then I asked him, "John, do you think there might be a small church somewhere that's having a hard time finding a minister, that might consider calling me? I don't need much money. I'm used to living on an MVS allowance, and I've begun receiving my half of Peter's ministerial pension."

"I know just the one," John replied without hesitation. "Ransom and Hanston, Kan., each would like to have their own minister after sharing a minister for some years. I'll give them your name and let them see the forms you filled out when you were licensed. Then let's see what happens." I knew that talking to John was God's leading.

I was beginning to think of the possibility of becoming a pastor, but I didn't know if I could do it. Anyway, who would hire a 63-year-old divorced woman?

After returning to St. Catharines, I had almost forgotten about that talk with John. The Friendly Visitor Service kept me busy. One night I had a phone call from John Dietterich, one of the deacons from Ransom. He asked me if I would consider coming out to preach on a Sunday and meet the people at the Mennonite church there.

"Would I?" Talk about excitement. We made arrangements and I flew out the first part of June 1991 at their expense. I preached my old standby, "Learning from Jesus to Lighten Your Load." We had a potluck together, and I met kind and friendly people. It felt right and good. Even the weather cooperated. It was a gorgeous spring day, and Kansas felt like home. I had always wondered what it would be like to live in a small town, and soon maybe I'd find out. Ransom has a population of about 380.

Several weeks later, after I returned to my MVS job, I got another phone call from John Dietterich. He told me there had been a unanimous yes vote. How soon could I come?

What a joy I felt that night. I was not afraid. I knew God was directing me and would see me through this new adventure in God's service. Hadn't God led me this far? God is still leading me. On Sept. 15, 1996, I celebrated five years in Ransom. God is great and God is good. The people in Ransom have also been good to me. Praise God!

Marjorie Reimer Ediger retired June 1 and lives in Denver.

10 ways to serve our servers

Marlo M. Schalesky

1 Pray for your leaders specifically and individually. Let them know you are remembering them in your prayers. Ask them if there is anything in particular you can bring before God on their behalf. Ask to pray for them for a few minutes before church service, small group or Sunday school, when they will be leading or speaking in the church.

2 Express your appreciation in writing. Send or give the leader a note that tells them specifically what you appreciate. Did they deliver a particularly good message that helped you in your life? Perhaps their caring and concern has touched you? Tell them so. Let them know you are thankful for their efforts.

3 Use your skills to make their lives easier. Are you a mechanic? Offer to service their car. Do you cook well? Bring over a casserole or a plate of cookies. Offer to clean their house, mow the lawn or paint.

4 Give them an "evening on the town" with their spouse and offer to baby-sit the kids. Give them tickets to the symphony, the movies or a play. Or give them a gift certificate to one of their favorite restaurants.

5 Squelch any gossip that comes your way. If you hear a negative comment, respond with a positive one. Spread positive and encouraging words through your congregation or group.

6 Offer suggestions by saying, "I'd like to help by …" rather than, "You need to …." If you think of an improvement that can be made, take the responsibility for the work involved to implement your idea.

7 Take your leader to lunch. Ask questions about how they are doing and feeling. Let them talk about their dreams and goals for ministry. Stop yourself from talking about yourself. Instead, spend the time listening attentively.

8 Offer to "substitute" in their ministry so they can take a break. Teach a class for them, help with some administration duties, offer to do some research for an upcoming lesson or talk.

9 Tell them how their ministry is affecting you personally. If you took their advice in a lesson and applied it, let them know. Show them their efforts are making a difference in your life.

10 Most importantly, abandon all your preconceived expectations of your leaders. Forget what you think they ought to be doing, or how they should be acting. Remember that they are doing the best they can.

If we work to serve and encourage our leaders, even if we are leaders ourselves, then we will find the ministries of our church growing not only with people but with joy and caring. Let us "serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13), especially those who are serving us.

Marlo M. Schalesky lives in Gilroy, Calif.

Squelch any gossip that comes your way. If you hear a negative comment, respond with a positive one.

Reflections from a veteran pastor on how pastoral ministry has changed and what pastors need

Pastors are human, too

Ronald Krehbiel

When I began to prepare for pastoral ministry 47 years ago, it was because I believed I had a calling from God, to serve Christ and the church in this capacity. At that time pastoring was the most respected occupation to which anyone could be called. People inside and outside the church thought pastors to be sincere people who practiced what they preached. Devout Christian parents encouraged their children to consider whether God might be calling them to be pastors or missionaries.

Changes: A lot of these attitudes changed over my 42 years as a pastor. Few parents these days encourage their children to consider pastoral ministry for these reasons:

1. You can earn a lot more money almost anywhere else, and you don't have to work as long or as hard. Most of my sons make a lot more money than I ever made in the ministry, and none of them has the number of years of preparation.

2. Ministry is no longer as respected a profession as it was 25 years ago.

3. Most people cannot stand the pressure, the lack of job security or to see how few changes most churches are willing to make for Christ's kingdom to advance. Twenty-five years after I graduated from seminary, half of those who graduated with me had left the pastoral ministry, for many reasons.

How can this situation be improved so that pastors again receive the respect they deserve and can lead congregations courageously, sensitively and prayerfully like they have been called to do?

Ways to help: Much depends on the pastors, but I suggest a few things where you can help your pastors become the best they can be.

1. Pray each week for them, your church and yourself. I remember how much it helped me to know that many of the people in my churches were praying for me. Because of this I felt closer to God and my congregations.

2. Do not prejudge or misjudge your pastors. They may not have the same gifts as previous pastors, but they do have special gifts God has given them for the work of ministry. If you recognize this, encourage them and pray for them. The Holy Spirit will use all of you to do much for God's kingdom.

3. Don't treat your pastors like you own them. If you encourage them, they will work hard for God's kingdom. There are few people who stay in ministry long who are not hard workers, so it isn't necessary to keep track of them every minute of the day. Remember they have families who need them, too, and they also need times for refreshment, recreation and relaxation. Unlike most of you, they can and are called almost any hour of the day or night. If I look back over my ministry, one of the biggest mistakes I made was thinking that God wanted me to serve the church first and my family and self second. I now know this was a terrible mistake in misunderstanding the will of God for my life. Your pastors need breaks like we all do.

4. Finally, don't make demands on your pastor you would not want made upon you.

Ronald Krehbiel, Hesston, Kan., retired last year after 42 years in the ministry.

> ***One of the biggest mistakes I made was thinking that God wanted me to serve the church first and my family and self second.***

Letters

STATISTICS DON'T TELL ALL

Someone once said, "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies and statistics." I had to think of this when I read the article "Put Your Church's Money Where Its Mission Statement Is" (March 25 issue, p. 3). Ray Bowman and Eddy Hall describe a church whose mission statement declares its commitment to evangelism and to stewardship that emphasizes others. Yet that same church, they say, spent "87 percent of [its] budget on institutional maintenance (facilities, staff and operations) and only 13 percent on ministry to others. Only 2.5 percent was going toward meeting the needs of people in the local community. The church was not putting its money where its mission statement was."

I spent my first 10 years as a pastor in two small, rural Presbyterian churches in eastern Kentucky. I am now pastor of a yoked parish of two small (one rural, one small town) churches in southwest Iowa. In my experience, at least 50 percent—usually more—of a small church's budget goes to its pastor (this includes salary, maintenance of the manse, utilities, insurance, pension and travel, mostly for visitation). Does this mean the church is spending that money "only on itself"? I don't think so.

The two main things a small church gives to the community are the pastor and the building. For example, last week I made six trips to visit people in the hospital (a 20-minute drive one way) and not one was a member of either of the churches I pastor (although all were known to people in my churches). At the smaller of my two churches, the majority of the children who attend Sunday school are from the community and are not children of church members. When I came out of Princeton and was interviewing for the Kentucky pastorate, I asked the committee if it would be OK if I spent some of my "church time" ministering to people in the community who were not necessarily church members. "Mind?" they said. "We expect you to do that."

Obviously, meeting the needs of the church and the community were not considered mutually exclusive. To judge whether a church is "living up to its mission statement" based only on its budget percentages is like judging a book based solely on its cover. In my experience, to assume based on a budget that only 2.5 percent of a church's time, money and care is going to people outside the church is so far off it's almost laughable—I have seen that in reality it's easily 10 times that amount. *Tim Maxa, pastor, Lenox United Presbyterian Church and Sharpsburg Presbyterian Church, Lenox, Iowa*

NAME IS A MIXED BAG

Both the General Conference General Board and the Mennonite Church General Board have affirmed the proposal made by the MC/GC Integration Committee that the name for the new integrated denomination be "Mennonite Church." However, this name is a mixed bag; it has both strengths and weaknesses.

There are three major strengths: (1) The name is short, (2) it puts the word "Mennonite" in focus, (3) it communicates clearly to the wider society.

However, the name Mennonite Church also has three major weaknesses: (1) It is ambiguous because it refers to two distinct corporate entities, i.e. the preintegrated Mennonite Church and the postintegrated Mennonite Church. (2) The name is arrogant to a medial degree; it does not recognize that this denomination is one out of many Mennonite denominations. (3) It gives the appearance that the General Conference Mennonite Church is being subsumed by the Mennonite Church.

Given both its strengths and its weaknesses, the name Mennonite Church merits a letter grade of B-/C+.

Other name possibilities that have been suggested fare about the same. The names "Mennonite Church North America," "Mennonite Church General Conference," and "Mennonite Church of Jesus Christ" also have both strengths and weaknesses. Any name chosen for the new integrated denomination would be a mixed bag. It is important for us GC people and MC people to be aware of both the strengths and the weaknesses of the name "Mennonite Church." *Brent A. Koehn, Arlington, Texas*

IS ILLINOIS CONFERENCE ILL?

"Our conference is sick" set the tone for passing by-laws to discipline two congregations who have members practicing homosexuality. The mood in Illinois begs for other modes for restoring health:

- Practicing listening: as North American Mennonites learned to listen and learn from the "still small voice of Calcutta" to discern how others seek to be faithful in new specific contexts of ministry;
- Practicing dialogue: three years of "one-way" telling others what is wrong replaced by "going there";
- Practicing conflict resolution: resolving family conflicts before laying down the law;
- Practicing larger learning: homosexuality is best understood by a study of sexuality;
- Practicing learning from the larger church: the Jerusalem Conference, the Virginia Conference, the offer of help from church boards;
- Practicing nonproof-texting: picking out one sin from the list and not disciplining prejudice, militarism, sexism, nationalism, affluence; creating a new biblical precedent for expelling a congregation, based on Revelation 2;
- Practicing nonuse of pressure: no threats of, "If we don't pass this, six or seven churches leave";
- Practicing nonpolarizing: the "I'm right, you're wrong" atmosphere;
- Practicing nonselective Holy Spirit endorsements: "This year's vote is God's will, not the last two years' votes";
- Practicing consensus: not voting a new by-law of such import with a 20-minute discussion limit and with no vote on closing discussion. *LeRoy Kennel, Schaumburg, Ill.*

THANKS TO MARTHA GRABER

Please convey our appreciation to Martha Graber for her good job of reading *The Mennonite* on audiocassette. *Elmer and Marie Ewert, Marion, S.D.*

Editor's note: The Mennonite *is available on cassette tape for only $30 per year, thanks to the efforts of Martha Graber. To subscribe, contact us at P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; 1-800-757-5101.*

Children are people, too

Denise Preller is director of God's Little Acre Preschool at North Danvers Mennonite Church, Danvers, Ill., where she's a member.

Guidelines for disciplining your children

Christian discipline of children involves principles of conflict resolution.

Denise Preller

Little will spark a bigger conflict than a discussion of how to discipline children. It touches the deepest parts of who we are as a people, our view of God, family, the church, even the future of our nations.

Mennonites have developed many resources to aid in dealing with conflict. Their commitment to peaceful resolution of conflict distinguishes "Mennonite discipline" from "mainstream Christian discipline" as it relates to children.

Guiding principles for dealing with peaceful resolution of conflict include:

1. All parties in the conflict should be treated with respect and dignity.
2. Violence (physical, verbal or otherwise) is never an acceptable solution and is not part of Jesus' plan for our lives.
3. For a conflict to be resolved peacefully, there cannot be a winner and a loser—there must be two winners.
4. Both sides must agree on the solution. A resolution to conflict will not be lasting if one side dictates the solution.
5. All sides must feel like they were fully heard.
6. Fear and intimidation do not lead to good conflict resolution.
7. Both sides must honor the solution, and accountability must be integral.
8. Confession and forgiveness are encouraged and honored in the process.

How do these conflict resolution principles translate to children and discipline?

1. Children are people, too.
2. Children have the right to be treated in a way that respects their personhood, which is their existence as a unique and special child of God, wholly loved by God.
3. Children being raised in Christian homes should expect to experience their parents as models of Jesus' ministry in these ways:
   - respect for their right to learn by making mistakes,
   - respect for their right to disagree with their parents,
   - respect for their right to be safe in their bodies,
   - respect for their right to be safe emotionally,
   - respect for their right to be a child and not an adult,
   - respect for their right to be angry, unhappy, sad or tired,
   - respect for their right to be forgiven,
   - respect for their right to grant forgiveness,
   - following out of love and respect not fear,
   - reasons, not rules.

Warning signs that your method of disciplining is damaging, not teaching, your children:

- Punishment varies depending on how "mad" you are.
- You would never consider apologizing to your children.
- After you "punish" your child, you feel better and it helps you get rid of your anger.
- Your children fear you, and you believe that is how it should be.
- Appropriate discipline is not something you have to think about; you know how to "keep kids in line."
- You use "should" statements all the time with your children.
- When disciplining your children you often say to yourself, "I'm doing this because my parents did this, and it worked for them."
- When disciplining your children you often use the Bible and God to justify their punishments.
- Physical punishment is an important part of how you discipline your children.
- You agree with the following statements:

—"I'm in charge in my household because I'm the mother/father."
—"A strong willed child must be broken."
—"Children must be controlled."
—"Adults should never be questioned by children."
—"Parents make rules, and children follow them."

Goals for discipline that teaches, not damages:

- Punishment is consistent and takes the form of restitution when at all possible.
- Parents model Christian confession and forgiveness by asking for forgiveness from their children whenever they make a mistake.
- After a child is disciplined, the child still feels wholly loved by their God and their parents, has made restitution and does not carry lingering shame.
- Your children respect you and look to you for wisdom, instruction and guidance. Your children do not fear you. In fact it is you, not your children, who fear. You ask yourself if you have been a good steward of the wonderful gift God has given you of your children.
- When disciplining your children you often say to yourself, "I know what my parents would have done. Should I continue in that model, or is there a better way?"
- When disciplining your children you recognize that linking God constantly to punishment is contrary to Jesus' model of a God who loves us each unconditionally and teaches them a model of God as punitive. You bring God into the picture when reminding them there is nothing they could ever do that would make you or God stop loving them.
- You earn the right to lead your household day to day based on the respect you earn by being a consistent, honorable leader who demonstrates love and respect for those you lead.
- Parents and children make rules together. Parents also submit to the rule-making process when appropri-

Profile

As if separated at birth

Two MVS workers build a lifelong friendship as they serve others together.

Christy Risser

Timing is everything. For Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) workers Kerrin Short and Kristin Epp, the timing that brought them to the unit house in Dallas, Texas, one day apart will affect the rest of their lives.

"I can't imagine not knowing [Kerrin] for the rest of my life," Kristin says.

"It seems to me that I've always known her," Kerrin says.

These two MVS workers chose independently to go Dallas and serve in assignments at the East Dallas Community School. Kerrin is a teacher, Kristin a bookkeeper. Yet since arriving, then sharing some extremely intense experiences, these women have established and fostered a friendship that they expect to last a lifetime.

"I think we're really sisters," Kristin says.

"I think we were separated at birth," Kerrin says.

Both women grew up in similar situations, albeit hundreds of miles apart.

A native of Archbold, Ohio, Kerrin grew up on a farm in a close-knit Mennonite family. Kristin, whose roots lie in Marion, S.D., also grew up in a close-knit Mennonite farming household.

For Kristin, the reality of the Dallas unit was not what she had envisioned.

"My whole image of VS was different than it really is," she says. "I expected to live in a big dump of a place. I didn't know how finances worked, how groceries and cooking worked. I've learned about budgeting five different people's schedules with one vehicle. I'm learning how to compromise, how to be with others."

Their common work assignment at East Dallas Community School has helped Kristin and Kerrin's friendship develop and grow. Founded in 1978, EDCS is the culmination of the vision of Terry Ford. Ford began her elementary school teaching career in the mid-'70s and realized that low-income and minority children were not getting the education they needed to survive their neighborhood environment. She looked to the Montessori school model and created EDCS.

The founding principle of the school is simple: "All children, no matter their race or economic conditions, can and will succeed in school given the right environment." Visitors to the school today can see that Ford was right. Encounters with inquisitive and obviously intelligent children are the norm. And the nearly 20-year history of the school is showing that EDCS graduates have a success rate that far exceeds the national average for poor and minority children.

For Kerrin and Kristin, working in this open-learning environment has enabled them to learn to know themselves and their future calling in life more clearly.

"I've gotten an independence I never experienced before coming here," Kristin says. "I'm figuring out who I really am instead of who I've been told I am.

"I can't imagine not having done [MVS]. People told me these would be the most memorable two years of my life. I wondered how that could be. Now I know."

MVS workers also find a sounding board for future job opportunities.

"If I had gone out and gotten a job [after college], I would pretty much be the same person," Kerrin says. "But when I think about getting caught up in money and living in the 'right' part of town, I don't want that. And I can't imagine doing that in the future."

MVS workers live in a community house. The Dallas unit has five members. Kerrin and Kristin now share a room, because the house is full. Still, they work hard to keep their friendship from excluding the others.

"We make a conscious decision to not do everything together," Kerrin says. "Both of us want to have relationships with the others in the house, and we don't want the others to feel left out, just because [we're] friends."

As Kerrin and Kristin prepare for their time in MVS to end later this year, they are considering whether to find jobs in the same area so they can continue sharing living space.

Sisters: *Kristin Epp (left) and Kerrin Short*

"We've both gotten so used to the community living situation that we have here, we don't really want to get totally out of it just yet," Kerrin says.

"We've been through a lot together," Kristin says. "The bullet holes in the house, the gang graffiti, the car blowing up and the bugs. You can't change those experiences or the friendship we have built coming out of them."

"And we don't want it to change either," Kerrin says.

Christy Risser writes for Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart, Ind.

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continued from previous page

ate. Rules do not exist without reasons and do not change without the mutual consent of parents and children.

- Children are empowered to question parents and adults in a respectful and appropriate way as a demonstration of equal personhood.
- Physical punishment is not a part of your discipline program.
- Developing appropriate discipline for your children is a top priority for you as a parent and you consistently re-evaluate what you are doing.

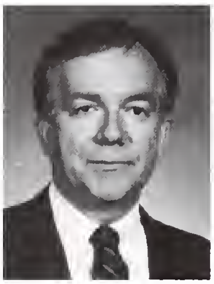
Mennonites have much to contribute to this discussion among our Christian brothers and sisters. Let's encourage and support one another to discipline our children with honor, not anger, seeking love, not fear, learning, not compliance.

Fiscal health

Is volunteerism dying?

While volunteerism seems to be growing in popularity in the wider society, it is waning among church people.

J.B. Miller



J.B. Miller is financial services product manager for AMA Solutions, Inc. in Chicago.

Not long ago I was talking to someone who works at planning church conferences, and I was struck by something that was said. This person noted that it is increasingly difficult to find people who are willing to volunteer their time to assist at conferences and other church functions. From summer Bible school to youth sponsorships, there just are not enough people willing to volunteer.

"More and more, people want to be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses. Often there is no feeling that this is my contribution to the church," this person said.

Delving a bit deeper, I learned that volunteers are hard to come by. There are not enough people willing to staff information booths, serve on host committees and all the other important things necessary to pull off a good church conference. What has happened to the days when church conferences were volunteer events?

Since I'm turning 50 this year, I am old enough to remember church conferences that were totally driven by volunteers. From men who erected the tent for the conference's services to women who cooked all the meals, there were no paid staff. Granted, those were the days when many church members were self-employed, and they didn't have to take vacation days to attend the conference, like some would today. But is this unwillingness, or inability, to volunteer a sign of more systemic problems in the church and society? I think it may be.

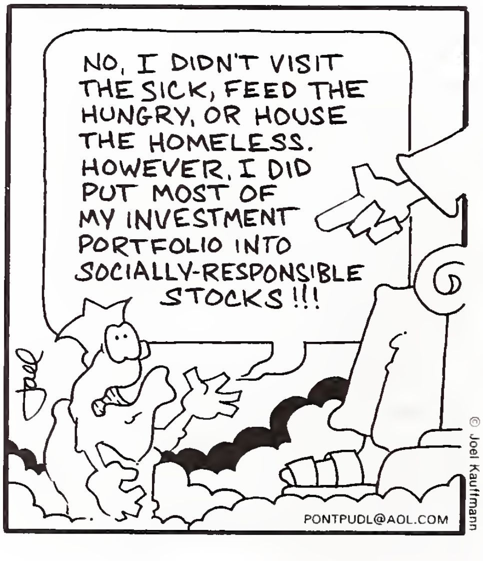
In May a presidents' summit on volunteerism was held in Philadelphia. Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, chaired the event, and every living U.S. president, with the exception of Ronald Reagan who was represented by his wife, Nancy, attended.

Who could find fault with an event like this? Little, if any, taxpayer money was spent, and it emphasized volunteers—people who make a difference in society without costing the taxpayer anything. Wouldn't you think that everyone would be on board? But no, even volunteerism gets a bad rap these days, especially from political conservatives.

Lower taxes: Rush Limbaugh, who I thought would support volunteerism, since it might result in lower taxes, was quoted as saying, "Citizen service is a repudiation of the principles upon which our country was based. We are here for ourselves."

The only thing I can say to that is that at least he is honest enough to acknowledge the real agenda of some tax-cutting political conservatives: Give me less taxes. Who cares what happens to the poor?

Pontius' Puddle


NO, I DIDN'T VISIT THE SICK, FEED THE HUNGRY, OR HOUSE THE HOMELESS. HOWEVER, I DID PUT MOST OF MY INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO INTO SOCIALLY-RESPONSIBLE STOCKS!!!
Joel
© Joel Kauffmann
PONTPUDL@AOL.COM

Still other civic leaders got into the fray by questioning community service requirements for high school students, suggesting that community service should not be a prerequisite for graduation. While the graduation requirement for community service may not be seen as volunteerism, it is an appropriate requirement for schools to make. Not until I was involved in community service as a high school senior was I subjected to the abject poverty that existed in my community. I could not conceive that people went to bed hungry and got up in homes with no heat, even in the dead of winter. Those events shaped how I see the poor and less fortunate people in my community.

The fact remains, if we want to cut taxes, reducing resources for the poor, then the church and other charitable organizations are going to be forced to pick up the slack. Without federal programs there are many people who are going to fall through the cracks. Their safety net is gone.

If the comments are accurate, that few people want to volunteer for church activities anymore, then we can hardly expect church people to volunteer to meet the needs of the community around them.

Until I had my conversation with the conference coordinator, I thought church people might be part of the solution. But if the comments are accurate, that few people want to volunteer for church activities anymore, then we can hardly expect church people to volunteer to meet the needs of the community around them. I hope I'm wrong.

Do you have ideas for the Fiscal Health column? Send them to us at P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

News

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MCC worker swaps one crisis for another

Winnipeg (MCC)—In late April, Dan Wiens hurriedly left a deepening crisis in Haiti—drought, hunger and increasing insecurity—for one developing in his home community in flood-stricken Manitoba.

Wiens and his wife, Wilma, Mennonite Central Committee Haiti co-directors, own a 35-acre market garden near St. Adolphe, a few miles south of Winnipeg. They are renting it out for the five years the family is in MCC service.

Family members living in the St. Adolphe area e-mailed the Wienses regularly to inform them of the approaching flood.

"Then I got a call from my brother telling me he thought he was going to lose his house [to the flood] and that my sister would probably lose hers, too," Wiens says. Their parents' home was also in danger.

"When my brother phoned, that really put it over the top for me. I realized I needed to be with my family and friends during this unprecedented tragedy, and I wanted to try to save what I could," Wiens says.

Family and co-workers in Haiti, as well as MCC staff in North America, agreed that Wiens should return to Manitoba. He left April 21, and was fighting the flood on April 22.

The family renting the farm had organized crews to sandbag the house the day before. Water was lapping against the bags when Wiens arrived.

By Friday, the flooding was so severe that provincial officials advised people to evacuate the area. However, "I never left," says Wiens. He stayed on the farm until the situation had stabilized and the water started going down 14 days later.

"My situation wasn't dangerous," he says. Even if the sandbag dike around his two-story house had given way, he could have moved up to the second story to await rescue or left by boat.

The sandbag dike around the house held, but some water began seeping through and had to be pumped out. Wiens tended his pumps 24 hours a day, waking up at three-hour intervals throughout the night.

Swamped by the flood: He also cared for his parents' and two neighbors' houses, going from one to the other in a borrowed boat. In the end, one house couldn't be saved. An estimated 70 to 80 percent of the area's houses were swamped by the flood.

"We managed to save our house but the victory is hollow because so many of our neighbors' homes were lost or swamped," Wiens says. "This will be a sad place for some time to come."

Wiens praises the Canadian government's handling of the crisis. He was unable to help comparing it to the situation in Haiti, where people have learned over the years not to expect help from their government.

Wiens says his predicament has helped his Haitian friends and acquaintances better understand that North Americans face problems and suffer during a crisis. He was touched by his Haitian friends' empathy.

"But it's really unfair to compare the two situations," says Wiens. It's inappropriate to tell people here that it's worse in Haiti, he says, and difficult to convince people in Haiti that North Americans really are suffering.

Unlike Haitians, most Manitobans affected by the flood have the resources to rally, says Wiens. In Haiti, he says, "there's a state of constant crisis." *Rick Fast*

Bruce Hildebrand (MCC)

Wade in the water: *Mennonite Central Committee Haiti worker Dan Wiens, left, struggles to save his farm and home from Manitoba floodwaters.*

Inside the news

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Last Salvadoran refugees return home / p. 15

Rebels enter Kinshasa peacefully / p. 16

Commentary: Zairians return blessings / p. 17

CPT protests human rights abuses in Mexico / p. 18

The Evangelical Press Association awarded *The Mennonite* and Jean Janzen first prize in poetry for Janzen's poem "After the Martyrs Exhibit" (July 9, 1996, issue).

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Integration flavored the 41st annual sessions of Central District Conference April 17-19, hosted by First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind. The pending merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church affected conference staffing issues, as delegates voted to renew the terms of the two part-time youth ministers, Wendell Badertscher and Steve Ropp, and the associate conference minister, Glen Horner, for just one year instead of the usual three. Six conference church plants became self-supporting; one congregation, Zion Mennonite, Remington, Ind., disbanded. Faith Fellowship, an outreach project begun by Assembly Mennonite, Goshen, Ind., was received into conference membership. Delegates adopted a budget of $245,000, which calls for an increased income of approximately $20,000 over last year's receipts. The conference theme was "Flowing Through Us to the World." Jonathan Larson, pastor at Berea Mennonite Church in Atlanta, was guest speaker and resource person. (*Ruth Naylor*)

First Mennonite Church, Kelowna, B.C., will celebrate its 50th anniversary Aug. 15-17. Former members and children, friends and relatives are invited. For information contact the church at 1305 Gordon Drive, Kelowna, BC V1Y 3E7; (250) 766-4678.

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The Goodwill Society women's organization of North Star Mennonite Church, Drake, Sask., celebrated its 50th anniversary March 16. Members and former members enjoyed a worship service, fellowship meal and reminiscing. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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If you like to bike, you can turn your biking miles into money for Mennonite Central Committee. Each year MCC sponsors bicycle rides to raise funds for work overseas and in North America. For information on upcoming rides, call Saskatchewan, June 13-14, (306) 665-2555; Manitoba, June 21-22, (204) 261-6381; Colorado, July 18-22, (316) 283-2720; Pennsylvania, Aug. 3-7, (717) 859-3889; South Dakota, Sept. 4-8, (605) 925-4859; Kansas, Sept. 26-27, (316) 283-2720, and Ohio, Oct. 3-5, (330) 264-5579.

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The flooding of the Red River in Manitoba brought together people from churches, institutions, prisons and the military as they helped sandbag and prepare meals for volunteers and evacuees. Several Bible colleges housed evacuees in dorms, and students and faculty helped with the sandbagging efforts. Evangelical Mennonite Church pastor John Klassen, evacuated from Rosenort, Man., is continuing his ministry from a Winnipeg hotel. He sees the flood as an opportunity for witness. "I think it has a way of bringing out the best in people," fostering a sense of community. Klassen was a refugee from the Ukraine in 1943, staying first in Holland, then finally moving to Canada in 1948. "I know what it means to have nothing and live out of a suitcase." (Carol Thiessen in *ChristianWeek*)

After the deluge

Lowell Detweiler (MDS)

Fargo, N.D. (MDS)—Pictured is Irv Reimer of Hesston, Kan., climbing the steps of a sandbagged house by the banks of the swollen Red River (in background). Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers helped pressure-wash and disinfect the basement of this and other flood-damaged houses. Reimer and his wife, Edna, serve as MDS project leaders for the Fargo-area cleanup.

MDS continues to seek volunteers to help clean up in the aftermath of Red River flooding in Manitoba as well as North Dakota. Particularly needed are people capable of lifting and carrying heavy objects, such as wet sandbags or soggy carpets. To help in North Dakota, phone (701) 237-6095; in Manitoba, (888) 240-5480; or, for general information, the MDS office at (717) 859-2210.

Southeast suspends Atlanta church

Sarasota, Fla.—Less than a year after accepting a homosexual couple as members, Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship (AMF) has been "placed under suspension" for one year by the Southeast Conference of the Mennonite Church (MC).

AMF is also a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC).

Delegates to Southeast's semiannual meeting May 17 approved the resolution by a 45-18 vote, three more than the required two-thirds majority.

According to the resolution, AMF will not be allowed to vote in the conference, and members cannot hold conference offices or other positions of authority. The congregation is also directed not to advocate a position on homosexuality different from conference or church positions.

Southeast Conference, MC and GC statements call homosexual sex sinful but do not address whether noncelibate homosexuals can be church members.

In a statement to the delegates, AMF emphasized that the congregation has never claimed homosexual sex is not sin, only that it should not disqualify a person from membership.

After the year's suspension, AMF's position will be reviewed and reported to conference delegates for possible further action, including the possibility of excommunication, says conference minister Raymond Martin.

AMF becomes the fourth MC congregation in six weeks to face conference action because of homosexuality. On April 5, Illinois Conference placed Oak Park (Ill.) Mennonite Church and Maple Avenue Mennonite Church, Waukesha, Wis., under discipline. Three weeks later, Franconia Conference could not reach a decision regarding Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, which remains a conference associate member.

Like AMF, these three congregations are also GC-affiliated.

Martin says the the Southeast resolution was not just about homosexuality.

"We will also look into all our churches to deal with sin and not lift one sin above another," he says. *Rich Preheim, associate editor of* Mennonite Weekly Review

Last Salvadoran refugees return home

Tegucigalpa (MCC)—Honduran Mennonites recently turned what are likely the concluding pages of a life-changing saga.

In the 1980s, some Mennonites in Honduras risked their lives and reputations to aid Salvadoran war victims who had fled to their country in search of refuge. Now, 15-plus years later, they helped the last 42 refugees, living where the Mesa Grande refugee camp once stood, return to El Salvador.

"It gives me a great deal of satisfaction to be able to participate in this last stage of helping the refugees," says Honduran Mennonite pastor Isaias Flores. "We felt we were able to serve these people who were foreigners here. It was an opportunity for the church to be a witness."

Flores was president of the national church during much of the war. He and his wife, Berta, accompanied the last group of refugees on their April 4 trip home, as did Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers Clair and Galen Litwiller. The Litwillers serve with the Honduran church's Social Action Commission in the border community of Tambla.

Galen Litwiller

Home at last: *Abraham and Porfirio Luna take down their house at what was once Mesa Grande refugee camp in Honduras. They will use the materials to build new houses back home in El Salvador.*

Honduran Mennonites of the San Marcos Mennonite Church became involved with the refugees partly because of their proximity to the camps. They could literally see the needs of the thousands of people displaced from their homes and fields.

But the decision to help was not easy. By 1980s Cold War logic, the Honduran government considered all Salvadoran refugees communist. Thus, anyone who helped them became suspect.

Mennonite leaders learned their names were on a military list. Mennonite workers were often stopped and interrogated at military checkpoints.

But they are thankful they suffered no more than intimidation—and disapproval, including from some Honduran Mennonites who did not live as close to the situation.

From others, however, they gained respect. The church is now known as people who acted compassionately when it was dangerous to act.

Workshops and warehouses: MCC worked in partnership with the Honduran Mennonite Church in the Mesa Grande and Colomoncagua refugee camps, under the direction of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. The commission assigned the Honduran Mennonites and MCC workers the coordination of construction of latrines, housing, schools, workshops and warehouses and, later, added supervision of agriculture and communications systems.

Of the final 42 refugees who returned to El Salvador on April 4, more than half—27 of them—are under 18 years old. The 16- and 17-year-olds were infants when their mothers fled.

Most of the Mesa Grande refugees returned to El Salvador in the late '80s. A small group remained in Honduras, hoping for an opportunity to migrate to a third country. Many had had relatives killed and land taken in El Salvador.

MCC provided funds to assist with transportation for the 42 returning refugees.

Some 25 MCC workers served in the Honduran refugee camps for six months or longer during the 1980s and early '90s. Many others served for short-term periods, especially during the initial emergency stages of refugee settlement. *Daryl Yoder Bontrager*

Swift Current (Sask.) Bible Institute, which closed last year, has been sold to the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Swift Current.

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The Saskatchewan Arts Board has awarded Stephanie Bowman, a member of Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, a $10,470 grant. Bowman will use the grant to continue her nine-sculpture "Cup of Trembling" series, based on Isaiah. (Jake Nickel in *Mennonite Reporter*)

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Black Creek (B.C.) United Mennonite Church will celebrate its 60th anniversary Aug. 16-17 with a program, Sunday worship, noon meal and social time. For information contact the anniversary committee at the church, 2277 Enns Road, Black Creek, BC V9J 1H7.

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Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship's fourth biennial Mennonite Arts Weekend (Feb. 6-8, 1998) invites submissions for the third edition of Living Mirror, a collection of Mennonite youths' writings. Students ages 8 to 18 are invited to send poems, short fiction and short nonfiction by June 30 to Suzanne Marie Hitt, 1011 Brayton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45215; (513) 821-6446.

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The Mennonite Environmental Task Force met in Hyattsville, Md., April 12-13. The group, made up of representatives from the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church, made plans to collect stories of Mennonites working on environmental concerns and sponsor an art contest for children and young adults, and sent out surveys to Mennonite institutions asking how they are incorporating environmental concerns into their work.

Every 60 seconds, 47 people around the world fall into poverty (defined by the United Nations as earning less than $1 U.S. a day)—67,000 people a day. Seventy percent of them will be women. (*Windows East and West*)

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The Leadership Commission of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada has lifted probation for Dalton Jantzi, Toronto. Jantzi was placed on probation two years ago for violating sexual boundaries in his ministry at Warden Woods Mennonite Church in Toronto. Jantzi will be recognized as a "minister in specialized ministry," and is restricted to ministry settings where women and children are not part of the context. Jantzi has appealed the commission's action. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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A revised approach to declining donations occupied most of the discussion at the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada spring sessions, April 4-5 in Leamington, Ont. During the meeting, delegates endorsed the executive board's proposed list of actions for renewing the conference's vision. The delegates unanimously approved participation in a plan to create a Canada-wide magazine, *Canadian Mennonite*, to replace *Mennonite Reporter* and *Nexus* in September 1997. (*Ron Rempel*)

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A group of Mennonite artists, educators and supporters of the arts has formed the Association of Mennonites in the Arts (AMITA). Meeting April 19 at the Mennonite Information Center in Berlin, Ohio, the group established a vision for the organization: "to focus on artistic expression in Mennonite traditions, whether derived from culture, faith, spiritual expression or life experience." Philip Clemens, pastor at Beaverdam Mennonite Church, Corry, Pa., was named director of AMITA. For additional information about AMITA or its publication, *Kairos*, write Clemens at 17721 Route 89, Corry, PA 16407.

Rebels enter Kinshasa peacefully

Kinshasa, Zaire (MCC)—The five million residents of this city, who include several Mennonite church workers, are breathing a collective sigh of relief.

The bloodbath many had feared when rebels who began seizing territory in eastern Zaire some seven months ago arrived in the capital on Saturday, May 17, did not happen.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila has declared himself president, and Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled Zaire for nearly 32 years, has left the country.

"It feels like last weekend's events were an answer to prayer," wrote Mennonite Central Committee workers Ann and Bruce Campbell-Janz in an e-mail to MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa. The couple directs MCC work in Zaire.

However, some areas of Kinshasa did suffer heavy looting, including the home of MCC's Zairian administrator, Epampia mbo Wato. The family was frightened but unharmed.

The looting seems to have stopped as the rebels, known as the Alliance, established control.

Under Mobutu's dictatorial rule, Zairians saw their country disintegrate. The economy collapsed; government services were nonexistent.

"People were clamoring for a change," says Bruce. "The hope now is for democracy and elections." He predicts the country—the third largest in Africa in area—will need at least a year to prepare for elections.

"I feel the Mennonite church here has a potentially very important role to play in the message of peace—that peace does not just mean lack of war," writes Bruce (see below). A small group of Mennonites has been meeting to discuss producing peace posters.

Zairian Christians have provided spiritual support to the MCC workers during the past months. At a May 12 chapel service in the building where MCC has its office, Pastor Mama Lala reminded those gathered that "neither Kabila nor Mobutu could separate us from the love of God."

The MCCers did not attend church services on Sunday, May 18, fearing their presence might attract too much attention. However, a delegation from the Mennonite Church of Zaire later came to check on them.

MCCers are looking forward to working in the same country once again. Eastern Zaire, where MCC workers Fidele Lumeya and Krista Rigalo live, has been cut off from Kinshasa since October 1996, when rebels seized control of Bukavu.

Zaire's new leader has renamed the country "Democratic Republic of Congo." The country became Congo in 1960, immediately after independence from Belgium. Mobutu later named it Zaire.

Talking peace amid turmoil

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—In a country torn by civil war, 27 Zairian Mennonite church leaders met for a peace seminar in Kinshasa Feb. 5-8.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) had arranged for Juan Jose Romero, director of the Brussels (Belgium) Mennonite Peace Center, and Neal Blough, a Mennonite Board of Missions worker in Paris, to travel to Zaire to conduct the seminar.

"Juan described mediation, the functions of a mediator and the steps in a mediation process," said Roussel Kumakamba, the seminar organizer. "Neal emphasized that, for Mennonites, power must be exercised in accordance with the spirit of Christ, with truth, justice and peace as the guiding principles." Kumakamba is interim executive secretary of CONIM, an inter-Mennonite committee that represents the three Zairian Mennonite church groups.

At the close of the seminar, Kumakamba urged participants to share what they had learned in their communities and churches.

Romero and Blough spent the next week teaching conflict mediation and theology courses at the International Center for Missiology in Kinshasa. The center was founded several years ago by Nzash Lumeya of the Zairian Mennonite Brethren church. About 40 students are currently enrolled, studying to be pastors or missionaries.

COMMENTARY

Zairians return blessings

Bukavu, Zaire—In mid-October 1996 war arrived in eastern Zaire when an ethnic minority's rebellion evolved into an alliance of political opponents determined to end Mobutu's dictatorial reign. Laurent Kabila, his long-time opponent, guided this alliance.

"When two elephants fight, it's the grass that gets trampled," says an African proverb. As Kabila's rebellion moved north through Bukavu, we witnessed firsthand the destruction of these two fighting elephants. To complicate matters, the region had more than 15 Rwandan refugee camps; some harbored people implicated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Kabila's troops forced the refugees to flee into the forest or return to Rwanda. Armed elements among the refugees pillaged Zairian villages and mission stations surrounding the camps.

Fidele Lumeya (MCC)

Dance for joy: *Justin, youth president of the Mennonite church in Bukavu, Zaire, helps distribute hoes donated to farmers.*

For Zairian farmers and villagers this war and the ensuing rampage by refugees, who had ironically been their neighbors, have been devastating. Hoes, machetes and farm tools were stolen; crops were dug up and eaten. Schools, health clinics and churches were looted and destroyed. For Zairians struggling to survive a 10-year economic crisis, this latest disaster could have been fatal.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) helped feed those who would have the most difficulty: widows, orphans, handicapped, elderly and chronically poor. MCC also recognized the importance of helping the region's farmers begin producing food again. We purchased seeds and tools for victims of refugee looting around four MCC-created refugee camps, distributed hoes, machetes and seeds and gave tools to farmers north of Bukavu who are cultivating land that was formerly a refugee camp.

MCC also purchased a three-month supply of medicines for health centers in the four former MCC camps, replacing medicines looted by refugees. Four health centers in Bukavu and three centers to the south also received supplies.

Sighs of relief and cries of elation greeted the seeds, tools and medical supplies. In Katana, women farmers danced for joy, clanging their hoes with sticks and singing. It was humbling for us to witness the hope these simple hoes represented. Would we have been moved to dance for joy upon receiving a $5 hoe?

In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus tells who we should invite to our feasts. Often we invite those closest to us, those who can reciprocate. Christ says we should be inviting the poor instead. They cannot pay us back or return the invitation. But by inviting the poor to share our blessings, we will again be blessed.

In Zaire those benefitting from MCC's gifts cannot reciprocate materially—by sending funds or supplies for victims of the Red River floods in North Dakota and Manitoba, for example. However, Zairians can and do reciprocate in another way. Time and again, beneficiaries have bestowed blessings on us—on MCC and its supporters.

In Zairian culture one does not pronounce a blessing or a curse lightly. While the farmers, widows, orphans and chronically poor of Zaire are often the voiceless ones, they have time and again communicated to us a simple yet profound sentiment, "May God bless you." *Fidele Lumeya and Krista Rigalo, MCC Zaire*

A Church of England bishop gave up something unusual for Lent—reading the Bible. Ecumenical News International reports that Bishop Alan Smithson spent his two-hour daily reading time with the Koran, the Muslim holy book, instead. "If only all Christians would take seriously the beliefs of other traditions and religions, we would all be the better for it," said Smithson. He also said he looked forward to getting back to the Bible at Easter. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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Mennonite health-care providers gathered April 3-6 in Pittsburgh for the 45th meeting of Mennonite Health Assembly, part of which focused on managed care. In small-group discussions that were part of the plenary entitled "Managed Care: You Haven't Got a Choice," participants expressed worries that managed care (such as health management organizations) sacrifices patient care for low-cost outcomes and compromises the professional and moral judgments of providers in the face of managed-care mandates. "The growth of managed care will create incentives to undertreat and underserve," said Sheldon Goldberg, president of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and plenary speaker. "But managed care will be part of your lives; we had better get on with planning for it so we can get on with healing our communities." This year was the first time people with disabilities were included in the weekend events. Nearly 70 people with developmental disabilities and their assistants from eight organizations joined the assembly on Saturday afternoon. Sunday morning's plenary session was a Faith and Light worship service led by Nancy Eisland, professor at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. Faith and Light services intentionally include people with disabilities in the worship experience. This was also the first time Mennonite mental health counselors met during Mennonite Health Assembly. (*Valerie Weaver*)

Paulo Freire, Sao Paulo, Brazil, died May 2 at age 75. Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, believed literacy among the poor was the key in creating awareness, or "conscientization." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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The board of Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, meeting April 18-19, has indicated its desire for federation with Concord College (Mennonite Brethren) in Winnipeg and Menno Simons College of the University of Winnipeg but has slowed down the time line by one year. The board formally resolved to "take all necessary steps to ensure that it be able to present to the July 1998 Conference of Mennonites in Canada session for final approval a detailed and adequately consulted upon proposal for college federation."

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About 60 Mennonite mission leaders met April 19-22 in St. Louis and adopted a consensus statement, aimed primarily at the Integration Committee, urging that "missions and evangelism ... be the guiding factors for integration" and that the committee give "a voice to voices [that] aren't often heard." The annual gathering of Canadian and U.S. mission leaders and workers was organized by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church. Much of the six-paragraph statement addressed concerns about the report the GC and MC General Boards received from the Integration Committee following its Feb. 28-March 1 meeting. "We see the absence of a mission statement as being a weakness in the process," said the mission leaders' statement. It also noted "considerable confusion about the concept of 'a denomination of regions'" and concluded with a request that the Integration Committee solicit feedback from youth, young adults and others not typically heard in church business sessions. (*Tom Price*)

CPT protests human rights abuses in Mexico

Dallas, Texas (CPT)—Two members of Peace Mennonite Church "uncovered a world" of torture and other human rights violations May 15 at the Mexican Consulate here.

Duane Ediger and Stephen Obold were part of a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation expelled from Mexico in April while attempting to document allegations of arbitrary arrest, destruction of property and torture in the southern state of Oaxaca. Since then, Mexican immigration authorities have expelled at least 15 other international human rights observers.

Calling for an end to the torture and other abuses CPT documented in Mexico, Ediger uncovered a large globe and declared, "The world is increasingly transparent. Torture can no longer be hidden. As long as it happens anywhere, we or other witnesses will stand up and make it known."

Ediger, Obold and other supporters then took turns reading the testimonies of a jailed teacher and wives of other political prisoners from Oaxaca.

"Torture can no longer be hidden." ***Duane Ediger***

In a letter they delivered to the Mexican consul, Ediger and Obold cited the Mennonite history of experiencing persecution and torture. "We know that torture's scars run deep," the letter said. "They affect people in a way that makes acts of torture unjustifiable in all circumstances."

In recent weeks, the Mexican government has been toughening its policies toward foreign human rights observers in Mexico

Individuals and delegations visiting regions of the country such as Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca, where militarization, social discontent and reports of abuse are commonplace, have been expelled ostensibly for violating the terms of their tourist visas.

On April 8, Mexican authorities kept a CPT delegation—Ediger, Obold, Arlene Kindy (North Manchester, Ind.), and Heather St. James-Perry (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.)—from visiting a prison and a remote area of Oaxaca to investigate reports of arbitrary detentions and torture.

The April CPT delegation to Mexico had planned to visit the state penitentiary in Oaxaca City, capital of Oaxaca state, some 300 miles southeast of Mexico City, to interview prisoners from Loxicha, then travel to their villages.

On April 7, when the delegation arrived in Oaxaca City, the previously authorized visit to the prison was denied for unspecified reasons.

The following day, a local government official from Loxicha announced by radio in the capital that he could not guarantee the team's safety in the Loxicha region.

That same day, immigration authorities delivered letters to the team requiring their presence in Mexico City within two days, claiming the intended activities of the team violated the terms of their tourist visas. Human rights observers have traditionally been allowed to carry out their missions in Mexico using tourist visas.

After being denied entry to the prison, team members took testimonies from a dozen wives of prisoners of serious abuses by the State Judicial Police, including destruction of property, ransacking of household goods, forced confessions, police brutality and various forms of torture, including electric shock to the genitals.

Many of the women had come from Los Loxicha, an area near the Pacific coast about 150 miles south of Oaxaca City. Some spoke no Spanish and had no place to go. They had come to Oaxaca City not only to stay with their husbands, but also out of fear for their own safety at home.

Most of the men of Loxicha were members of social action organizations. The 14 members of Loxicha's municipal council, along with others, were arrested on a single day and remained behind bars, untried, after more than six months.

The local Human Rights League, which sponsored the delegation's trip to Oaxaca, organized a press conference where CPT members shared the reports of the women.

"As people of faith, we are concerned that human rights abuses [among the Mayan people of Mexico] be exposed," said team members. "People in our U.S. and Canadian churches will want to know about and take action on such matters."

Record

AMBS—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

DEATHS

James Spoot Owen, Pauingassi, Man., died March 13 at age 79. He was ordained as a minister in 1972.

MINISTERS

Arnie Fehderau is pastor at First Church, Saskatoon.

John Lawrence is pastor at Koinonia Church, Chandler, Ariz.

Jed Lin is assistant pastor at Cupertino (Calif.) Church.

Jason Swihart was ordained May 11 as pastor at Bethel Church, Hydro, Okla.

WORKERS

Oswald H. (Ozzie) Goering, Moundridge, Kan., is Bethel College's Outstanding Alumnus for 1997.

Joe Hertzler is retiring as director of development at AMBS. He served in that capacity for 26 years.

Scott Hiebert, Cordova, Tenn., is Bethel College's 1997 Young Alumnus.

John Kampen, Cincinnati Fellowship, will be vice president and academic dean at Bluffton (Ohio) College beginning Aug. 1. He replaces **Donald Pannabecker**, who is retiring after 33 years.

Ralph Lebold, Waterloo, Ont., director of external programs at AMBS, is leaving due to health reasons.

Art McPhee will be assistant professor of mission and evangelism at AMBS beginning Aug. 15.

Mary K. Oyer, AMBS professor of church music, was honored for 50 years of teaching in church institutions.

Edwin P. Willems, Sugar Land, Texas, received Bethel College's Distinguished Achievement Award for 1997.

Goering

Hiebert

Kampen

The General Conference Mennonite Church has designated July 6 as Peace Sunday. A free list of worship resources including responsive reading options, hymn and Scripture suggestions, a sermon outline and banner ideas are available from Commission on Home Ministries, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, (316) 283-5100.

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Adolfo and Betty Puricelli, native Argentinians, expected to serve God in Latin America after graduation from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in the late 1970s. Instead, they have spent the past 14 years in a holistic ministry to newcomers in Toronto. For their work, they received a 1997 James and Rowena Lark award from Mennonite Board of Missions, presented to them April 4 at the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada spring conference. The Puricellis co-pastor New Life Faith Community in Toronto. The second 1997 Lark Award will go to Natalie and Leslie W. Francisco III, church planters in Virginia. (*Ferne Burkhardt*)

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At the invitation of local supporters, Christian Peacemaker Teams is organizing teams for CPT-Rebuilders Against Bulldozers (CPT-RAB) to the Middle East for Aug. 5-17, Oct. 7-19, and Dec. 10-22. When arrangements can be made, CPT-RABs will help rebuild demolished homes. CPT is also assembling a 10-member delegation to Chiapas, Mexico, Aug. 9-20, in the wake of national elections. For more information about CPT-RABs, e-mail Wendy Lehman at cptrich@igc.org. For information about all delegations, contact Kryss Chupp, Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680; (312) 455-1199; fax (312) 666-2677; e-mail synapses@igc.org.

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Submit resume and request for information to **Pastor Search, Germantown Mennonite Church, 21 West Washington Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19144.**

Northgate MB Church needs an **interim pastor** for 13 months starting immediately until June 30, 1998, to fill pastor's sabbatical leave. We are a small, diverse congregation in the northern farming community of Dawson Creek, B.C. (pop. 10,000).

For more information, please contact **Delores Plenert at (250) 782-3589; fax (250) 782-9135.**

Ten Thousand Villages, a handicraft marketing program of Mennonite Central Committee, is recruiting for **short-term volunteers** for the fall (Aug. 25 to Dec. 19) to help in the Akron, Pa., warehouse.

For more information on these opportunities, please call **Sherrie Ober at (717) 859-8117**; or e-mail **smo@mcc.org.**

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Reviews

BOOKS

CARING FOR CONGREGATIONS

Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach, *by Peter L. Steinke (Alban Institute, 1996, 118 pages, $12.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Katherine Jameson Pitts, Salina, Kan.

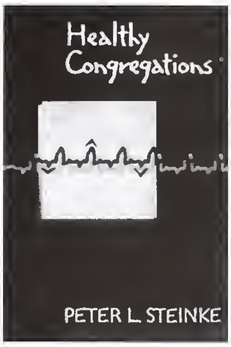
Health care has moved from a disease-treating perspective to a wellness promoting stance, and Peter Steinke attempts to do the same for the local congregation. Beginning from a systems-theory perspective, which holds that an organism is best understood by looking at the relationships between the parts rather than examining each piece separately, this volume focuses on how healthy churches function and how all churches can promote healthy functioning.

The book is divided into three sections. The first, "Wholeness," lays the conceptual framework for understanding systems theory. Many illustrations and diagrams are used to clarify the technical information presented. Steinke depends heavily on a biological metaphor and at times may push that metaphor too far.

The second section, "Disease Process," describes how systems may enable disease rather than health. Anecdotes from congregational situations bring life to this section, and any church will recognize itself in the stories.

The final section, "Health Resources," focuses on the stewardship of the congregation. The book promotes a preventive approach to managing our life together. It stresses application of the theory rather than a list of quick fixes.

Steinke writes with clarity, although he seems to assume some background in systems theory. The theoretical material may be difficult for someone new to systems theory. The many illustrations do provide application of the theoretical, and material is presented in short manageable sections. A helpful feature is the inclusion of discussion questions for each chapter. This makes the volume usable for a leadership retreat or study group where the insights gained could be applied to a specific setting.



The lack of "how-to" instructions can be frustrating for the action oriented, but the many thoughtful gems scattered through the book make it valuable reading for all who care about the life of congregations.

PEACE AND PUBLIC OFFICE

Living Faith, *by Jimmy Carter (Times Books, 1996, 256 pages, $23 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Elizabeth G. Yoder, Elkhart, Ind.

Mennonites have been intrigued with Jimmy Carter ever since he emerged on the national political scene. How could a sincere follower of Jesus, which he seems to be, reconcile his faith with holding public office—especially as President, the supreme commander of the armed forces? Carter's latest book attempts to explain how he relates his Christian faith to both his public and private life.

The attraction between Mennonites and Jimmy Carter is mutual—he mentions us several times in the book. And his book shows he has grappled with issues Mennonites would raise.

Living Faith begins with Carter's upbringing and early experiences—his marriage, his Navy career and his early tries for public office. His remarkable humility and frankness in admitting his failures and mistakes without self-justification are striking.

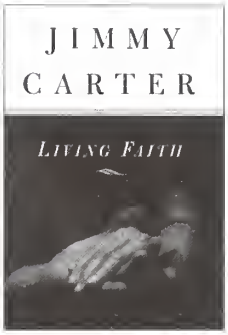
For those of us in the pacifist tradition, the meat of the book is the section of chapters that deal with his presidency and international peacemaking activities afterward through the Carter Center.

Of his presidency, Carter writes, "I prayed more during those four years than at any other time in my life, just asking for God's guidance in making the right decisions on behalf of the American people."

As president, his primary commitment was to "protect America's interests while living peacefully with the Soviet Union," but if peacekeeping efforts failed, he was prepared to use force. Nevertheless, 16 years later, he expresses enormous relief that he was not called upon to do that during his administration.

Several principles seem to have guided Carter's political career. One was a deeply held belief in the separation of church and state. Another was that use of force should be the last resort after every attempt at reconciliation has failed. His handling of the Iran hostage crisis is a case in point.

This last principle undergirds the mission of the Carter Center. In the chapter "Searching for Peace," Carter tells several powerful stories of how the activities of the Carter Center have averted bloodshed in trouble spots around the world.



It seems clear that Carter's most useful work has happened since his presidency. Yet without his having held that office, it is doubtful whether he would have the influence he does with world leaders today. Carter himself acknowledges that if he had chosen pacifism, he probably would never have run for public office. What pacifists have to face, then, is that if he had made that choice, he would not be making such a powerful contribution to world peace today.

INVISIBLE THREADS

The Longing for Home, *by Frederick Buechner (HarperCollins, 1996, 180 pages, $20 U.S./$28 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editor

This book, Buechner's 28th, includes recollections and reflections in two parts: "The Home We Knew" and "The Home We Dream."

The opening, title essay examines the meaning of home in our lives. The longing for home is "the longing to be at long last where you fully belong."

The rest of the first part of the book has Buechner recounting his own history and that of his extended family. The two most interesting pieces are a

The Longing for Home
Frederick Buechner

group of poems called "The Schroeders Revisted," about the family who appeared first in his novella *The Wizard's Tide*, and a longer essay titled "Of Whipples and Wheels," in which he tells the history of an old mill and the generations of people with some connection to it, including his own relatives. He ends with this insight: "The threads that bind us to each other are no less real for being mostly invisible, no less important and precious."

The second part consists of biblical reflections. While these are well done and include helpful insights, they lack the specificity of the earlier reflections and tend to sound too general. And Buechner's style can feel tiresome.

He includes this advice to preachers: "The trouble with many sermons is not so much that the preachers are out of touch with what is going on in the world or in books or in theology but that they are out of touch with what is going on in their own lives and in the lives of the people they are preaching to." Buechner has always modeled being in touch with one's own life, and for the most part he succeeds in this book. But it's more apparent in his autobiographical reflections than in his biblical sermons.

Nevertheless, he remains one of our better writers. If you haven't read him, do so.

Resources

- **Hill Station Teacher: A Life with India in It** by Ruth Unrau (Kidron Creek Publishers, Box 214, North Newton, KS 67117) contains memories of the author's experiences teaching at Woodstock International School in Mussoorie, India. Copies are available from Faith & Life Bookstore, or from the publisher for $12.95 U.S. each, $11.95 each for two or more, plus postage.
- **In Her Own Voice: Childbirth Stories from Mennonite Women** by Katherine Martens and Heidi Harms (University of Manitoba Press, 1997, $18.95 Cdn.) is a collection of interviews of women, most of whom are from rural and urban Manitoba.
- **Testing the Waters: Considering Covenant, Community and Baptism** by Jeff Wright (Faith & Life Press, 1997, $14.95 U.S./$20.50 Cdn.) is a Generation Why six-session Bible study for high school youth.
- **Mantras, Menorahs and Minarets: Encountering Other Faiths** by Gary Wilde (Faith & Life Press, 1997, $12.95 U.S./$17.75 Cdn.) is a Generation Why five-session Bible study for high school youth.
- **Unmasking the End Times** by Kathy Giesbrecht (Faith & Life Press, 1997, $9.95 U.S./$14.25 Cdn.) is a Fast Lane series Bible study for junior high youth to help them understand apocalyptic imagery and end-time speculation.
- **Meditations for the Newly Married** by John M. Drescher (Herald Press, 1997, $19.99 U.S./$28.50 Cdn., hardcover) is a gift-boxed deluxe edition of the book that gives the author's insights from his experience as pastor and family-life speaker.
- **Meditations for Single Moms** by Susanne Coalson Donoghue (Herald Press, 1997, $7.99 U.S./$11.40 Cdn.) offers 31 sets of meditations and poems for the single mother.
- **Focus: Telling Stories with a Video Camera** by Wayne Gehman offers tips for the video camera user. It was originally a guide for mission workers reporting on their work, through video, to home congregations. Available from Mennonite Media, 1-800-999-3534.
- **Telling Your Story Using Videos in the Congregation** instructs on how to use videos to enrich congregational life. Available from Mennonite Media, 1-800-999-3534.
- **Is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat? And 14 Other Polarizing Issues** by Tony Campolo (Word, 1995, $17.99 U.S.) tackles issues such as should Christians support gun control, prayer in school and gay-bashing.
- **Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development**, edited by Joann Wolski Conn (2nd edition, Paulist Press, 1996, $24.95 U.S.) examines the spiritual and psychological dimensions of women's lives.
- **Leading Women: How Church Women Can Avoid Leadership Traps and Negotiate the Gender Maze** by Carol E. Becker (Abingdon, 1996, $14.95 U.S.) presents new ways to advance the vocation of women in ministry.

Leaders needed for growing young-adult service program. **Service Adventure**, a program of Mennonite Board of Missions, is a 10 1/2-month-long service-learning program for young adults ages 18 to 20. There are currently six Service Adventure locations in the U.S. in both rural and small urban areas. Service Adventure leaders offer leadership, nurture and counsel to young adults who are part of the Service Adventure program. Leaders live in or nearby the household with the young adults. Leadership responsibilities take approximately half-time, which allows for part-time service work in the community. Qualifications include mature adults with leadership experience (or a willingness to be trained on the job) who have the desire and ability to relate to young adults, provide spiritual leadership and lead in conflict resolution. Two-year term preferred.

Contact **Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, (219) 294-7523**; e-mail **kent@mbm.org**.

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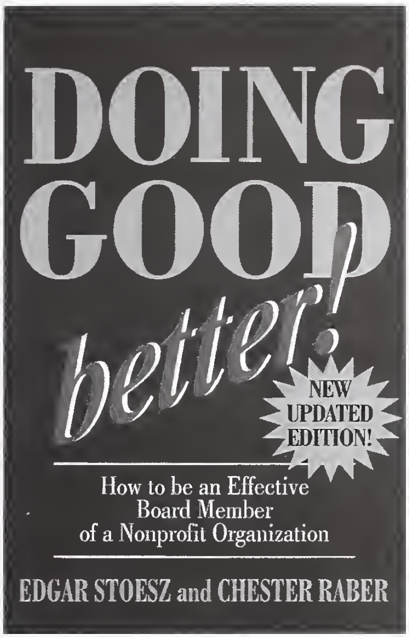
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Editorial

Each of us doing our part

Learning to do good works while letting God produce the fruit is tricky. We need pastors to help us, to keep our eyes on the upward call while our feet are close to ground, doing ministry.

God gives gifts to the church, including pastors and teachers, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12). Too often we expect our pastors to do most of the work of ministry—visit the sick, plan the worship, talk to visitors. No, that's the job of the saints, i.e., all of us.

The pastor's job is to equip us, to help us understand God's Word for us today, to administer comfort and focus our gaze on God's call to be the body of Christ. The word "pastor" comes from the word for shepherd. While we may not like thinking of ourselves as sheep, the care a shepherd shows for sheep is at least analogous to the care God asks pastors to have for their congregations.

> *We work by scattering seed and doing the harvest. But the growth is a mysterious process that God performs.*

Such a calling often puts pastors between a rock and a hard place. At times people put their pastors on a pedestal and carry high expectations of them. Yet people also don't always want to be directed or told what they should do. And how does one call the people who are one's employers to faithfulness when that may affect the pastor's continuing employment?

Ever since I became editor of *The Mennonite*, I've felt increasing sympathy for pastors. While not the same, certain aspects of the two professions are similar. Writing editorials may be analogous to preparing sermons. The readership of *The Mennonite* is like a congregation that I am accountable to and want to care for. And there is the feeling of being a public figure by representing more than myself, so that I must be extra careful about what I say or do.

As you read the stories of Arthur Paul Boers and Marjorie Reimer Ediger and their calls to pastoral ministry (pages 3-6), you will see that they did not pursue their profession out of a need to be on top, to rule over others, but out of a desire to serve. That must be the heart of any pastoral call, because power easily corrupts even the best intentions.

Greater strictness: The Bible says to "obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account" (Hebrews 13:17). Pastors (and editors) need to be aware of the power they hold. The Bible warns, "Not many of you should become teachers, … for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1).

The relationship of pastor and congregation seems to work best when the pastor's role is clearly understood as both a servant and a leader. Meanwhile, the congregation must understand its role as the one doing the ministry.

God's role, meanwhile, is to bring forth the fruit. The Gospel reading in one lectionary for June 15 is Mark 4:26-34. There Jesus describes the kingdom of God as someone scattering seed, then going to sleep. The seed grows, "[the sower] does not know how," then comes the harvest. Thus we work by scattering seed and doing the harvest. But the growth is a mysterious process that God performs.

In May my son and I watched *The Odyssey* on TV, which greatly condensed and in some ways obscured Homer's epic. At one point the goddess Athena tells Odysseus that he is to do his heroic deeds, but he must remember that it is the gods who ultimately control his fate.

Odysseus' lesson is ours as well. As I told my son, it's something you learn as you grow older. When young, you think you can do anything. With the passing of years you learn about your limitations. One danger is that we lose our desire to do the deeds we are called to do. Another is that we forget who is ultimately in charge of the success of what we do. The bearing of fruit is mostly out of our hands and in God's.

Let us encourage our pastors to do their part in equipping us for ministry. And let us do our part in doing that ministry, that the body of Christ may be built up and God be glorified. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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JUNE 24, 1997

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WORLD OF ENOUGH

Living simply
that others may
simply live

Prologue

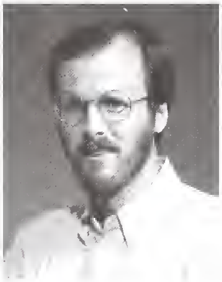
How easily we become sidetracked by debates over church structures or who is in and who is out among us when the sin of unjust acquisitiveness stares us in the face.

Most readers of this magazine accumulate more things than we need, while billions of people around the world don't have adequate food, shelter or medical care. Many of us are addicted to consumerism. We need help. It's not just an issue of numbers, of counting possessions. As Dave Schrock-Shenk writes in our lead feature (page 3), "Living with enough in a world of great need is a spiritual pilgrimage." We need to keep this question ever before us.

Terry Terichow (page 5) and Dale Hildebrand (page 6) write about their experiences working with poor people in Winnipeg and the Philippines, respectively. They learned more than they taught.

Mark Vincent, project director for the Giving Project, looks at how wealth can be an idol (page 10), and he calls us to be free from it.

Mikhail Zhidkov (page 10) has brought the gift of compassion to many children and prisoners in Russia. His story is inspiring.



Michael Ross, on the other hand (page 12), is a prisoner on death row, but he reminds us of the extravagant mercy of God, who wants to transform all us sinners into the righteous.

Talk with other disciples and look for ways to live with enough. *gh*

Next issue: Wise tourism in the Holy Land

Cover: Photo by Mennonite Central Committee

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Learning to live with enough in a world of great need is a spiritual pilgrimage.

Enough already!

Dave Schrock-Shenk

WORLD OF *e* NOUGH

Sometimes I get tired thinking about poverty. As a global educator for Mennonite Central Committee, I need to know how many hungry, homeless, hurting people there are in the world. So I do research and write articles and give sermons and try in many different ways to raise awareness of the needs of the world and how we can respond.

> ***We were created to worship and enjoy a relationship with God. Life is good, and we honor God when we enjoy it.***

But when I go home at night, I want to kick back and enjoy myself. I want to play with my son and talk with my wife and read books. Sometimes I want to spend money on a fun vacation.

I don't think there is anything wrong with that. For me, saying, "Life is meant to be enjoyed" is a statement of faith. I believe we were created by God to live joyful, satisfied lives.

Our ability to work comes from God. God created the earth that provides us the resources we need to meet our physical needs. Our ability to play comes from God. God gave us the urge to build relationships with others, to enjoy nature and to create art.

We were created to worship and enjoy a relationship with God. Life is good, and we honor God when we enjoy it.

Less than enough: But life is not good for everyone. It does not help me enjoy life when I pick up my church magazine and read one more article about the needs of the world—even if I wrote it.

Yet the facts are there. Around the world, many of God's children do not have the material goods they need to live the lives God intends for them. They do not have enough food or water. They do not have enough to wear. They do not have enough shelter. They do not have enough medical care or education.

These people need more, and they know it. About 1 billion people live in this global lower class.

More than enough: Another billion people have more material goods than they need. These people live in large, climate-controlled houses. They drive almost everywhere they go in private cars. They get much of their protein from meat. They wear new, fashionable clothes.

Yet many of these people are dissatisfied and want even more things. I could say "I" or even "we" instead of "they." Like most Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in North America, I belong to the global upper class.

But what can I do about that? The gulf between me and those at the bottom seems too big. No matter what I do, no matter how much I give, it never seems to close the gap. Do we have to choose between enjoying life

Dave Klassen (MCC)

Global realities: *Burundian women work together to plant beans. They are often too frightened to work alone and prefer to go to the fields with friends.*

or caring about God's children who are suffering and dying in Yugoslavia or Zaire?

Choosing enough: We do not honor God if we turn our back on God's suffering children. Neither do we honor God by allowing global realities to rob us of the joy of living. We must find a way to do as much as we can, to do enough, to respond to those who suffer.

For me, doing enough starts by living with enough. In a world meant to provide for all God's children, I want to live a joyful, fulfilled life using my fair share of the earth's resources. This allows me to have as much as I need and to share as much as I can.

Choosing enough is tough. Our culture tells us we can never have enough. A newer, more advanced version of everything we own always exists. We are surrounded with ads designed to create discontent with what we have and encourage us to buy more.

Yet rather than bringing us joy, an unlimited pursuit of things can bring a deep sense of loss. People with more than enough can be unhappy when they compare themselves with those who have even more.

We have to choose whether to believe the advertisers or God. The ads tell us more things will make us happy. God promises that learning to be satisfied with enough will bring us great joy: "There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these" (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

Living with enough: Accepting enough as the standard for our lives raises the question, "How much is enough?" And how do we live with enough when the structures of our society push us in the direction of "too much?"

Living with enough in a world of great need is a spiritual pilgrimage. The question of how to live with enough comes to us in our churches, our small groups, our families and our quiet time with God.

Living with enough will demand the full measure of God's grace and wisdom. May we be so blessed.

Dave Schrock-Shenk works for Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa.

We have to choose whether to believe the advertisers or God.

Do we have to choose between enjoying life or caring about God's children who are suffering and dying in Yugoslavia or Zaire?

Life is more than following rules and making more money.

God cares, and I learned to care

Bruce Hildebrand (MCC)

New values and priorities: *Terry Terichow at work at Winnipeg Harvest*

Terry Terichow

Without a doubt, my 97 weeks as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer at Winnipeg Harvest have changed me profoundly. What do I mean by profoundly?

I was born, raised and have lived my entire 48 years in a middle-class existence in middle-class Canadian society. I started going to church at 11 and accepted Jesus as my Savior at 12 in the privacy of my bedroom. I faithfully attended Sunday school and church and participated in all the activities expected of a born-again Christian at a middle-class evangelical church.

As a young person, I vowed to refrain from tobacco, alcohol, dances and worldly parties, and tried to keep myself pure. After I married and my wife, Gladys, and I began our family, I focused on having a good career, making money, owning a nice home and car, keeping up with the Joneses (or, in Mennonite terms, the Friesens and Penners) and doing the right things in my church and community. This is what I thought Christianity was all about.

But how did God fit in? I read my Bible and listened to the pastor and Sunday school teacher. Somehow these teachings and my life actions were not adding up. Something was missing. But what was it?

I knew I had blessings others didn't have. I knew we lived in a prosperous country and others didn't. I knew people had hurts I didn't have. Did it matter? Did I care? Should I care? It didn't affect me, so why should I care? Was my faith active, or was I simply playing by the rules? Who set these rules? Was I prepared to do anything about it or was I prepared to live life as I always had? Was I prepared to make changes? Could I make changes?

Crazy: I upset the apple cart and gave notice to my employer, knowing that my career as an accountant/loans manager might be over forever, that I would no longer make a normal living, that our house would be sold, that we would lose friends and family who thought we were crazy.

On Oct. 31, 1994, I began an MCC voluntary service position at Winnipeg Harvest, an inner-city food bank. Finally I began to feel God in my life. I could see God in many little and big ways. I began to understand more fully the reality of God's purpose in this world and in my life. I know God cares, and I learned to care. I carried into this assignment all my prejudices toward Native people and other minorities as well as my pieties and religiosities. But within weeks my negative attitudes began melting away as I saw these people as real people with real problems, loved by God even though they didn't follow all the rules of Christian piety.

I wish I had known all this 30 years ago and had lived my adult life as one who really cares, as one who can really love, as one who can really feel God in everyday life. I wish I could have taught my children and extended family by example a different set of values from the importance of following rules and making more money to buy more things we really don't need or even want. But I know I can't turn back the clock, and I will have to struggle to learn new values and priorities in my life. I did all the "right things" but with the wrong attitudes and without feeling.

Winnipeg Harvest offered me a paying job, albeit at half my previous salary level. Now that I'm no longer a volunteer, my hope and prayer is that I don't fall back into old habits and patterns.

Terry Terichow, originally from Morden, Man., now lives in Winnipeg and is a member of Morden EMMC Church.

Bake more pies, or learn to live with a smaller slice?

An entire family's possessions would fit into an average-sized wheelbarrow.

Dale Hildebrand

Like tens of thousands of other villages in the Philippines, Digayap can't be reached by car. You have to walk. Accompanied by Angie Banag and Ocio Porcincula, leaders in the Integrated Mennonite Church conference near Manila, I went to Digayap to visit one of the few Mennonite communities in the Philippine islands. It was here in this tiny place high in the Cordillera mountains that I pondered the differences between the lifestyles of North American and Filipino Mennonites.

In a world where ecosystems are already gravely overstretched by human consumption and waste, can we learn a lesson from the Mennonites in Digayap, Philippines?

WORLD OF *e*NOUGH

Our three-hour hike took us through rice farms, an abandoned cashew grove planted by the government 20 years ago in attempt to reforest the area and across the many spring-fed streams that are the lifeblood of the agricultural communities. The clean air was a welcome relief from the stifling polluted air that the 10 million people in Manila must suffer. I breathed deeply, secretly hoping to expunge any remaining traces of city air. The sun sank over a distant mountain ridge, bathing the valley in soft pastels, as workers made their way home along green trails to their pots of cooking rice.

We reached Digayap, a scattered community of huts, at sundown and proceeded to the home of Norma and Edwin Lorenzo, the pastoral couple from the Kankanaey tribe who lead the Digayap Mennonite church. The Lorenzo residence was typical: rough boards cut from surrounding trees for the floor and walls and sheets of corrugated tin for the roof. I was mystified as to how the tin had gotten to a place so far from the road. But when I asked, Edwin said, "On our backs," and gave me a look meaning, How do you think the tin got here?

Cooked rice: For residents of Digayap, commuting up and down the mountain trail is a fact of life. When they realized our driver had stayed in the valley below without rice for supper (in the Philippines, a meal without rice is like a sandwich without bread), a member of the community was immediately sent to take the driver a pot of cooked rice. The dispatcher returned six hours later.

While I have visited many poor families in Manila and other places, there was something different about this Mennonite community. During my two days in Digayap, I saw this was not a "people-living-in-grinding-poverty" story. Small plots of vegetables and fruit trees surrounded each house. The children looked healthy, without the vacant look in their eyes that indicates insufficient food.

At the same time, a North American

Dale Hildebrand (MCC)

Happy with their lives: *A resident of Digayap makes his way up the path to the village on a Philippine carabao (buffalo), the main mode of transportation for goods to and from Digayap.*

Is it fair for me to drive a car whenever I feel the urge to do so but expect my Mennonite sisters and brothers in Digayap to walk to their destinations?

would probably feel the residents were living lives of poverty. The houses were "empty"—upon entering, you might think they were deserted. But on closer inspection you would find a collection of simple possessions: a grass mat, blankets and pillows, perhaps two or three changes of clothing per family member, two cooking pots, a frying pan, a set of plates, drinking glasses and perhaps four or five kitchen utensils. An entire family's possessions would fit into an average-sized wheelbarrow.

As we sat outside in the light of a homemade oil lamp after a simple supper of rice and sardines, I asked the Lorenzos whether they felt happy with their lives. They replied that except for the long distance to schools and hospitals, they had everything they needed to be content.

I reflected on the vast differences between the lives of the Digayap Mennonites and North American Mennonites. How much is enough? In a world where ecosystems are already gravely overstretched by human consumption and waste, can we learn a lesson from the Mennonites in Digayap? What level of consumption would make it possible for people everywhere to have enough without destroying the earth's capacity to provide for future generations?

Is it fair for me to drive a car whenever I feel the urge to do so but expect my Mennonite sisters and brothers in Digayap to walk to their destinations? Should I expect to live in a six- or seven-room house while they make do with one room? Is it reasonable to say I need 10 or 15 sets of clothes but that the Lorenzo family can make do with two? Is the rich variety of foods I eat necessary when the Lorenzos and their neighbors are satisfied and healthy with simple, locally grown fare?

We used to think we could bake more pies to overcome poverty in the world. Now we have to confront the fact that the only solution to poverty may be in how the one pie we have is sliced. Mennonites in Digayap may have much to teach us about how to live with a smaller slice. But while a smaller slice may seem like bad news for us, we may find as we free ourselves from the race to accumulate more for our basements, closets and garages, we have more time to commune with life, with our families and communities, with our Creator. What I saw in the village of Digayap convinced me this is indeed good news.

Dale Hildebrand served with MCC in the Philippines from 1988 to 1991, and from 1995 to July 1996. He is a member of Warden Woods Mennonite Church in Toronto.

Letters

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A NEW, INTEGRATED NAME

As a lifetime observer of cooperation among Mennonites who were once estranged, I rejoice to see this day when the Mennonite Church (MC) and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) are committed to a process of integration. I rejoice even more to discover (like John on Patmos) a great multitude of new Anabaptist Christians from many tribes, peoples and tongues, standing among us and cheering us on.

The Integration Committee has done well.

It appears the new name it will recommend to us in July at Winnipeg and at Orlando will be Mennonite Church. For two reasons I believe that name should not stand alone:

1. Mennonite Church is the generic term for all Mennonites (one of five current meanings of the term "church" in English usage today) and should be reserved for the total denomination of all Mennonites everywhere, viz. Mennonite Church, Methodist Church, Lutheran Church.

2. In English syntax proper nouns in the singular are not used in a sentence without an article—the indefinite "a" or the definite "the."

Therefore, I believe "Mennonite Church" standing alone, while perhaps not arrogant, seems to be presumptuous on our part, if we hope to win friends among our other brothers and sisters in the total Mennonite denomination. If we claim the generic name as our own property we will need in proper speech to say "a Mennonite church" or more probably "the Mennonite church" and will be obligated again and again to designate which Mennonite church we are talking about—the denomination of all Mennonites or the specific group that is being integrated.

Thus I want to affirm and build on what the Integration Committee or General Boards apparently will recommend to us at Winnipeg and Orlando by suggesting the name Mennonite Church—General Conference. Or is there a better designation? *J. Herbert Fretz, Goshen, Ind.*

I was very disappointed to read the recommendation that the new, merged denomination have the name "Mennonite Church" with the periodical name "The Mennonite." This is a lazy and uncreative way of fashioning a new organizational reality. It would be a mistake that suggests both denominations can simply continue business as usual.

Please choose other names, not one each from the existing denominations, as this pedestrian "horse-trading" arrangement offers. Although objections could probably be found to any suggestions, I submit that a precondition of the process should have been not to use any existing names. I am a member of a General Conference congregation and have been employed by a church-related organization of the Mennonite Church for 16 years. I plead with the decision-makers to draw on the spirit of creativity in choosing these and other names. *David Rempel Smucker, Akron, Pa.*

ARTICLE WEAKENED MESSAGE

First of all, let me thank you for a good editorial ("Blessed Are the Dying") in the April 8 issue while at the same time comment on the first paragraph of the section "The Lord's Prayer." [Where Gordon Houser writes,] "… because we realize that justice will mean our losing some privileges and possessions we have learned to take for granted," I submit that more important than that is the fact that if we had justice meted out to us, we would all be eternally condemned. What we need is grace in order to be found acceptable to God. Then [Houser continues,] "we are not free to pray the Lord's Prayer … ." May I respectfully disagree with you? We are always free, in fact should be free, to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," knowing that whatever is God's will is for the best of us, as well as for his kingdom all over, wherever that may be. He never wants anything less than the best for us, his children (even if it may be what we may consider painful), because the end result is for good (ours and the Kingdom's).

I also want to thank you for printing my article ("From Where Have We Come?," April 8 issue, page 12), but as skillful as you were in condensing it, you left out some important words. You weakened it and had it say much less than I had wanted to say.

For example, the first sentence of the last paragraph was, "Do we too often *read* and believe pseudo-science (with its 'agenda') instead of God's Word?" See what the word "read" does to this sentence? It implies that we often read secular papers and books instead of the Bible. It seems incongruent to me that someone who reads God's Word frequently would easily be deceived by the secular humanist and the postmodernist (which you edited out) philosophies. The solution? To read and search the Scriptures more than we do.

Also, you removed mention of the Mennonite church around the world, and Menno Simons' strong belief in the Scriptures, and my appeal to all those who like to identify with Mennonites that we need to return to the God of … Menno. I consider myself a staunch Mennonite, but I feel the direction some want to take the Mennonite church is not at all biblical or helpful for the kingdom. I was hoping to make this a challenge for us to reconsider our focus and direction. *Wilmer Sprunger, Berne, Ind.*

ADMINISTERING ORDINANCES

Are our pastors "right" in setting a designated number of counseling sessions before administering ordinances of the church? I know of a couple of instances that turned off the individuals. Did we lose them? Philip baptized the eunuch on the spot. Jesus accepted the woman at the well—and she was a Samaritan. By the way, the instances mentioned were family members. The ordinances were marriage and child dedication. It takes courage to do, and wisdom to know. *Roger Wyse, Wayland, Iowa*

DISREGARD FOR MISSION

I wish to commend *The Mennonite* for your attempt through your articles and editorial in the May 13 issue to bring the theme "Transformed in Christ" into its proper perspective. I especially enjoyed "Fears Transformed into Joy" (page 5) and "Four Generations Come to Christ" (page 8) as well as your perceptive editorial.

I have found the choice of that theme by our conference leadership with reference to integration unfortunate and even disturbing. To take such an important part of the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ and apply it to a process of organizational and administrative integration shows, in my mind, a profound disregard for the sacredness of the mission given to believers by our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Thousands of miles away in a village in Botswana, some critical questions come to mind:

- In what way can we say we are being "transformed in Christ" when the integration process we enthusiastically affirmed at Wichita '95 is being slowed by administrative and political haggling over issues that primarily concern power and influence?
- In what way can we say we are being "transformed in Christ" when the integration process is taking so much time, energy and finances (which we are told are in short supply)—resources that should be used in our ministry to the hurting world just outside our doors?

I am reminded of something that took place a few years ago one Sunday when I was attending worship at a church here in Maun. In the midst of the worship service, the pastoral leadership of the church was called out to discuss a pressing issue regarding the financial administration of the congregation. The synod meeting was a week away, and the issue had to be resolved.

The discussion went on for hours. All the while the congregation waited patiently, singing hymns and choruses, for the pastors to return to pray for and bless the sick in body and soul. In the end, they gave up and went home without the prayers and blessings they sought, and the rousing financial discussion continued, the pastors hardly noticing that the congregation had departed.

I pray that this may not be found true of us. There are needs within and without our churches against which the discussion of "four regional centers" pales to insignificance. Do we have ears to hear? *Eugene Thieszen, Maun, Botswana*

QUESTIONS CONTINUITY OF GOSPEL

I appreciated Ivan J. Kauffman's insights concerning the recognition of the church of the ages as "gift" in "How I Became a Mennonite Catholic" (May 27 issue, page 6).

As an "Episcopal Mennonite" I also have a love for the Christ who continually welcomes us to his table to be refreshed. And I, as well, am grateful to the Catholic tradition for my own sense of connectedness to the church of the prophets, the social reformers, the monastics and martyrs of the church of the ages.

However, I am disturbed by Kauffman's characterization of the post-Constantinian settlement of the church as a time when "there was still great continuity" with the church of the apostolic period. If by continuity we are only to understand that the Bible was read, the ancient services of Eucharist and daily prayers continued, and that bishops continued to have oversight of the church with their presbyters, his assertion is correct. But if we understand continuity to involve fidelity to Jesus of Nazareth's subversive gospel of peace, true continuity must be seen to have been tragically compromised by the transition from an illicit religion to the new role as the provider of the empire's religious mythology. The Constantinian church became an institution that increasingly disempowered the laity into passive assistants at the clericalized liturgy while it exalted the sacerdotal hierarchy with powers that were modeled on the worldly vanities of the emperor. The post-Constantinian church blessed wars and coveted worldly thrones.

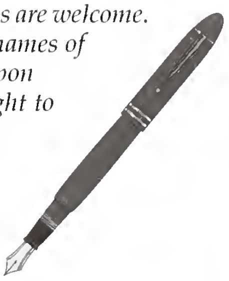
Granted, ideological distortion of the gospel can bring any church into a domesticated captivity to the dominant culture—whether Mennonite, Catholic or Protestant. But please, let there be clarity about the Constantinian settlement of the church. No real ecumenism will be served by ignoring the fact that since the fourth century, worldly power has reigned in the name of the suffering Servant King. That the Catholic tradition continues to be a living and rich faith demonstrates nothing so much as the supernatural nature of the gospel and the church. *Andrew Reesor-Taylor, Bluffton, Ohio*

MENNONITES AND CATHOLICS

Thank you for doing the May 27 "Drawn to Catholicism" issue. The testimonies of Eric Haarer and Ivan Kauffman and your editorial, "We Are All Catholic" are gifts of the Spirit for our edification and discernment. Having lived and worked and worshiped with some of Christ's brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church for some years, I believe Mennonites and Catholics have much to learn from and offer to each other.

Sparked by the title of your editorial, here is another suggestion for the name of the merging Mennonite churches: "catholic mennonite church"; or, to keep our nonhierarchical structure clear, "catholic mennonite churches." *Peter Ediger, Las Vegas, Nev.*

Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity. Send letters to* The Mennonite, *P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; fax (316) 283-0454; e-mail TheMennonite@gcmc.org.*



FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Thailand—We had an Easter celebration (on Palm Sunday) for a whole day at Nasomboun. Twelve people from the Roy Ed church (in a nearby province) came to help us in this celebration. They have a music team which uses traditional instruments to play the Issan Christian music. We worshiped, ate and danced traditional Issan dance together. It was a great experience to celebrate Easter in an Issan way. Approximately 80 people, including children, attended this special event. I was given the opportunity to preach at the worship service. May God receive all the glory. The ministry continues to receive God's blessings.

After a baptism on Feb. 23, four more people have come to us and said that they, too, would like to seek the truth and take the Life Enrichment course. The Lord has blessed us with 12 to 13 people now in our Sunday worship. We have some youth, women and a few men. Please join us in prayer that God will send us more men. In Thailand women seem to have more interest in the gospel than men. *Pat Houmphan*

Speaking out

● ● ● ● ▼

Be free from the idol of wealth

Wealth can be an obvious or subtle idol; either way it hinders our generosity.

Mark Vincent

There are two forms of idolatry. Both are dangerous. One is obvious, the other is not. Obvious idolatry is pledging one's life to the service of something. Obvious idols can be figures made of wood, stone or clay. Sometimes idols are elements of nature, like the sun or wind, or are mythological beings. Church attenders are familiar with this type of idolatry, having heard many a sermon that listed these along with contemporary idols like sex, money, position or fame.

People who are given to worship obvious idols readily proclaim their god: "I'll work for whoever is paying the most." "I'm an avid astrology buff." "I don't do church in the summer. That's softball season."

Subtle idolatry, however, is not so easily admitted. Subtle idolatry is fear of a god you don't worship. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Yahweh's people struggled with the notion that gods of other nations also existed. Perhaps gods were territorial. Perhaps gods were members of one large divine family. Perhaps we ought to sacrifice to all of them so we are sure to be protected.

In the New Testament, subtle idolatry shifts. Instead of concern to please all the gods, there is the problem of becoming consumed with avoiding anything possibly contaminated with idol worship. It was one thing to avoid meat people knew had been offered to idols, but some were taking no chances with meat they hadn't butchered themselves (1 Corinthians 10:25-27). This interfered with the church's ability to be a community marked by agape (love), to show hospitality to one another, to be effective in discipling new Christians toward maturity and to be a witness to society around them.

The blessings of a lavish God: We can turn wealth into an obvious or a subtle idol. We can worship wealth by being consumed with getting it. This is obvious idolatry. But we can also become consumed with not having money or being afraid of it or becoming judgmental of those we think might have it. This is subtle idolatry. Either way we cut ourselves off from being generous toward the God we claim to love. We lose our ability to rejoice with family and friends. We become too obtuse to spread wealth to the four corners of the earth. And perhaps most tragic of all, we shut our eyes to the manifold blessings of a lavish God.

> ***What we need is freedom from wealth, a profound sense that who we are, Whose we are, and what we are about continues whether we live in abundance or scarcity.***

What we need is freedom from wealth, a profound sense that who we are, Whose we are, and what we are about continues whether we live in abundance or scarcity. Our identity, our generous spirit and our zest for living should be freed from the enormous energy put into maintaining a wealthy way of life, and freed from the enormous energy put into making sure others live as simply as we.

Rather than worship wealth, our focus needs to be on pressing whatever wealth we have into service of the God we do worship.

Mark Vincent is project director for the Giving Project.

"Speaking out" and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite*.

Profile

● ● ▼

A cup of water, a word of hope

Mikhail Zhidkov brings compassion to prisoners and children in Russia.

Emily Will

"Our family's relationship with Mennonite Central Committee goes back over 70 years," says Mikhail Zhidkov, who is now nearly 70 himself. Zhidkov's grandfather Ivan and his father, Jacob, were members of the Evangelical Christian community that worked with MCC to distribute its first food relief shipments—to famine-stricken Russia and Ukraine in 1920.

In Moscow, Mikhail directs Compassion Ministries, a relief and social service agency he founded in 1989 that has become one of MCC's major partners in Russia. MCC shares office space with Compassion Ministries in the old central Evangelical Christian-Baptist Church compound. "This helps support all of us spiritually and socially, and it helps us better understand Russian realities," says Steve Hochstetler Shirk, co-director of MCC's work in the former Soviet Union.

Mikhail has some unique memories of interactions with North American Mennonites through the years. While visiting Mennonite churches in Pennsylvania in the 1960s, he says, the organization Mission Without Borders held anti-communist demonstrations.

MCC veteran Peter Dyck, now of Scottdale, Pa., recalls a potentially volatile situation when demonstrators carrying "KGB agent" placards entered a Mennonite church where Mikhail was to speak. "Bishop John A. Lapp handled it beautifully," Peter says. "He said, 'We are in church; this is our church and it's God's house and we want no disturbances here.'" The demonstrators took their protest outside, and Mikhail spoke.

"Now we are friends, and Mission Without Borders supports our work," Mikhail says. During the Cold War, however, some American Christians viewed any Russian Christian who worked within the Soviet system as a government minion, even a KGB agent. These U.S. Christians trusted only "unregistered" Christians who would have nothing to do with the Soviet system.

Looking back, Mikhail still believes it was better to gain limited freedom for worship by accommodating the system rather than so vigorously oppose it as to lose all freedom to engage in religious activity.

After 1956, when North American Mennonites slowly resumed contact with Soviet believers, they avoided partisanship, seeking instead to build trusting relationships with evangelical Christians across the spectrum, including leaders of the Soviet-government-sanctioned Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union, of which some Mennonites were members.

While some MCC and Mennonite leaders may have been uneasy with their relationship with Mikhail and other religious leaders who worked with Soviet approval, they were committed to walking alongside all Christians in the Soviet Union and to helping build bridges among them, "choosing not to judge," says Walter Sawatsky, MCC consultant on East-West relationships.

True calling: During the Soviet era, Mikhail pastored Moscow's Central Baptist Church. One Sunday, he delivered a sermon on compassion and invited church members to join him in a ministry at a local psychiatric hospital. There they bathed, held and fed patients. This occurred in 1989, when social work became permissible with "perestroika," or the opening of Soviet communism. Compassion Ministries had been born.

Mikhail, who had retired from his post as pastor several months earlier, realized he had found his true calling. "The pulpit in Central Baptist Church is elevated," he says. "I was high above the people, separated from them. When I began to work with Compassion Ministries, I came down from the high pulpit to be on the level of the people."

He relishes life at this level. And while Compassion Ministries has grown—it now has more than 100 volunteers and a number of paid staff, a large enterprise to oversee—Mikhail still takes time to visit those in need wherever they are, in soup kitchens, prisons, orphanages, hospitals, refugee camps and at police stations. He was one of the few ready to assist people infected with the HIV virus. His visits are pastoral.

While visiting young men crammed in a small, dark, stinky cell in the dungeonlike Yegorevsk Remand Prison, built in 1785, Mikhail speaks to them gently, as a grandfather. He tells them his grandson was imprisoned for three years after being accused of stealing a tape recorder but has lived a productive life since his release. God forgives and provides endless second chances, he tells the men.

Chocolate eggs: Later, with gusto, he joins in a silly "chicken" dance with teachers and children at the Tomeleno Children's Shelter in an impoverished Moscow suburb, then distributes cream-filled chocolate eggs he had brought. Taking a child on his lap, Mikhail asks her how she is adjusting to her new home. Tears well in his eyes as the teachers fill him in on her traumatic background.

At the police station, where people without documentation are sometimes detained for up to a month, Mikhail visits cells and notes the need for winter clothing and for canvas to stretch across the bed frames. There are no mattresses. He speaks kindly to the despondent, incarcerated men and women and offers Christian literature, translated into Russian.

While providing literature is an important part of Compassion Ministries' work, Mikhail believes that in sharing Christianity, "showing" is more effective than "telling."

"Showing is more difficult than merely telling. It takes more time; it is more sacrificial," he says. This conviction came to him through childhood experiences. He was 10 when police came to his home and arrested his father. During the couple of years of his father's imprisonment, his mother had difficulty scraping together food enough for her children to live on.

"It was dangerous to help the family of a man arrested for political reasons, and Christians such as my father were arrested for 'political' reasons. By Friday or Saturday our resources would be down to zero," Mikhail recalls. "On Sunday I went with my grandmother to the Central Baptist Church. Believers asked how things were going, then looked around and put something into our hands."

He adds, "The 'cup of water' and evangelism are inseparable. Showing by itself is not enough; preaching by itself is not enough."

Mikhail believes his life experiences have happily combined to make him particularly suited for his work, "the work of compassion," as he terms it.

Theology abroad: As a young man in the late 1950s he was one of four Russian Baptist students allowed to study theology abroad. He attended Spurgeon College in England, then McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont. Later, as pastor of Central Baptist Church and leader of his church union, he traveled abroad once or twice yearly, mostly to the United States.

Now his English language skills and broad contacts have enabled Compassion Ministries to grow and secure the material resources needed to reach out to hurting, hungry people in Russia.

MCC supports Compassion Ministries with grants and material aid.

Emily Will, MCC Communications, wrote this with Ruth Ann Stauffer, social services coordinator for MCC in the former Soviet Union.

Howard Zehr (MCC)

Compassion: *Mikhail Zhidkov chats with 7-year-old Seniya at the Tomeleno shelter for abandoned and abused children in Moscow.*

One tough lump of dough

The end of time will come, but God is patient and wants all sinners to be transformed.

Michael B. Ross

The end of time, of all things and all life as we know it will be a terrible time, a frightening time, a time when "the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise and the heavenly bodies will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10, Living Bible).

But as fearsome as that time promises to be, it also promises to be the most glorious of times. It will be a terrible and painful transformation from the limited experience that we have now to what God promises we will have with him. It will be a time of judgment, when the righteous and just will be separated from the unrighteous and unjust "just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32, Today's English Version).

When will that judgment come? What is God waiting for?

God is love and shows this love through infinite patience, not just with the righteous but with transgressors. If all God cared about were the righteous, then the end time would have come centuries ago. But God cares for all of us, even the greatest of sinners. God wants all of us to find our way home. "The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed but wants all to turn away from their sins" (2 Peter 3:9, TEV).

I am one of the greatest of sinners. I have murdered eight women in the most horrible manner. Many of the righteous believe that I have no place in "a new earth in which righteousness dwells" and that instead I should be condemned to eternal damnation.

Not too long ago I would have agreed with them. I had given up on myself. I couldn't see beyond my bloodstained hands. I couldn't see beyond the anger and hatred in my heart. I was consumed by an evil sickness that made me subhuman, and I believed I was beyond redemption. I couldn't believe in myself; I couldn't forgive myself; I couldn't love myself. And if I couldn't do these things, how could I expect God to love me?

But God is love and loves me. It isn't a love saved only for the righteous, the deserving. It is an unconditional love offered to everyone.

Sinners and outcasts: In Matthew Jesus ate at the tax collector's home with sinners and outcasts. He said to the Pharisees, who were outraged that Jesus would associate with such sinners, "People who are well do not need a doctor, but those who are sick. ... I have not come to call respectable people but outcasts" (Matthew 9:12, 13 TEV).

God reaches out to us all. It is easy to welcome the righteous and reject sinners. As theologian Edward Gabriele writes, "We are quick to moralism and slow to love. We who have been forgiven much and embraced by a compassionate God are too slow, if not totally unwilling, to be accepting, forgiving, compassionate and loving."

But God works to transform sinners into the righteous. Transformation takes time and is often painful. Sinners like me understand this all too well. My transformation took years—a long, painful process of self-realization and growth—and I'm not finished. Paul recognized transformation as an ongoing process. He wrote to the Philippians, "I don't mean to say that I am perfect. I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be" (Philippians 3:12, Living Bible).

> ***God works to transform sinners into the righteous. Transformation takes time and is often painful. Sinners like me understand this all too well.***

I was covered with evil, as sinful as they come. I was filthy in the eyes of the Lord. I didn't deserve God's help. I have sinned far more than most. Yet as filthy and repulsive as I was, God wasn't afraid to roll up his sleeves and reach down into that dark, dank pit of evil to give me a hand up to the light. It didn't happen overnight.

Marvin Moore writes in his book *Conquering the Dragon Within*, "The entrance of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is not like turning on a light switch that instantly dispels all darkness throughout the room. It's more like dropping some yeast into a lump of dough. The yeast penetrates slowly and has to be kneaded in. As the yeast spreads through the dough, each part that it touches is changed, causing it to rise. That's how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. The Holy Spirit is a principle of life that God drops into our minds and hearts, and as time goes on, the Spirit touches various parts of our character—our inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil—and changes them."

I was one tough lump of dough, and it took a lot of kneading before the Holy Spirit began to influence who I was. It took much time and effort, not just on my part but on the part of God, and on the part of a special priest, who like God refused to give up on me, no matter what.

There are many others like me, sinners on whom the righteous have given up. But God hasn't given up on them. And God will wait whatever time it takes to bring them to his glorious light. The day of "a new earth in which righteousness dwells" will come. Perhaps not as soon as some might wish, but it will come as promised. God is giving every opportunity possible for even the greatest of sinners to repent their sins and transform their lives for God's glory.

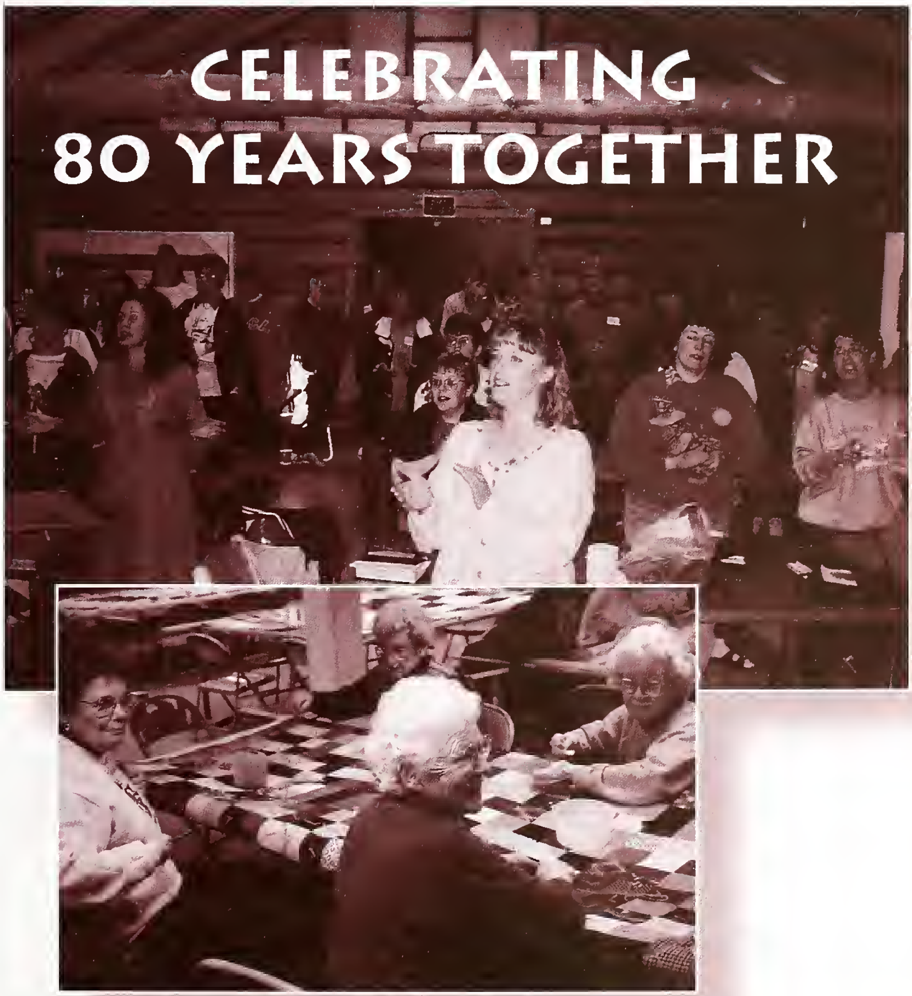
Michael Ross has been on Connecticut's death row since June 1987. He is under a stay of execution pending the resolution of the appeals process. He expects to be executed before the year 2000.

WM

THE Mennonite

June 24, 1997

WINDOW TO MISSION


CELEBRATING
80 YEARS TOGETHER

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. *Philippians 1:6*

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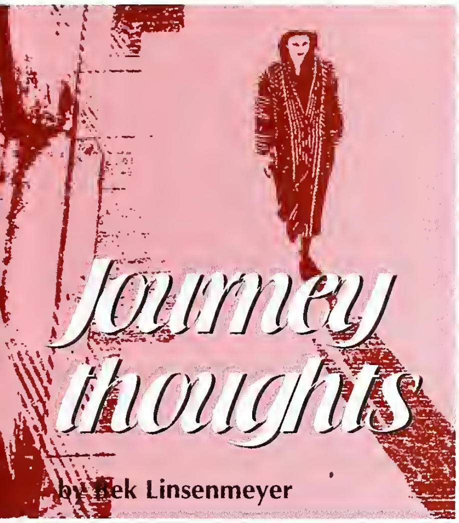
Cover : 1996 women's retreat British Columbia
Knotting comforters at Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio

Mission Statement: Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church encourages women to be personally reconciled and committed to Christ and seeks to call forth the variety of gifts given by the Holy Spirit to build the church of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to: (1) promote spiritual growth through Bible study, prayer, other Christian disciplines and fellowship; (2) discern and nurture women's gifts and skills for leadership and service in the local church, the community and the world; (3) build relationships and networks for support, affirmation, discernment, witness, service and celebration; (4) support and strengthen the mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.



Journey thoughts

by Bek Linsenmeyer

A recent gift has been the privilege of going through the Women in Mission archives, reading *Missionary News and Notes* (1926-1965), the *Guide to Mission Study* (1949-1958), *Missions Today* (1965-1973) and *Window to Mission* (1973 to present). A recent frustration has been the limited space in which to share **80 years** of WM history. How good it would have been if you could have shared in that review.

We may resist change, yet I imagine one of your thoughts on seeing the photos we've included is: My, how times have changed! The way we write has also changed. A 1928 article offered "Rules for Bible Reading." Now we would make six 'suggestions,' but the content is as useful now as then:

"1. Have a quiet place, a regular time and a set determination to read the whole Bible.
2. Be prayerful and thoughtful as you read. Use your knees, your brain and your pen.
3. Read, applying to yourself all the good things and warnings, just as though all were meant for you (James 1:25).
4. Give to others the best that you get, so that it will remain fresh to you.
5. Begin somewhere, anywhere, but begin; never give up. The only way to read the Bible is to read it; for there is no other way.
6. Make a list of all of the books of the Bible and when you have finished reading one draw a line through that name and go on to the next."

Following our March joint WM/WMSC meetings in Elkhart, Ind., I was questioned about how we were going to build a new organization with so much up in the air. The questioner wasn't at Elkhart, so he doesn't know how hard those women can work! We use the word "countless" to describe WM contributions through the years: countless quilts, school kits, layettes made in the name of Christ. Countless women, countless hours, countless prayers encircling the globe. Countless, then, is a precious word, not to be underestimated. When I was questioned about the future, our history came to mind and I said with full conviction, "Our women can do it." Carry those words from Philippians 1:6 with you as you continue this journey.

Bek Linsenmeyer completes her time with WM with this final issue of *Window to Mission.*

MUTINTA'S STORY

by Jean Hirschler

Dust whipped by whirlwinds blew around me as I walked the narrow path through dry grass leading to Mutinta's home. It was August 1995, and Zambia's dry season. I had been surprised to hear that my neighbor, Mutinta Nyirenda, was baking and selling bread, as she had a full-time job as a nurse in Macha Hospital. Needing some buns for my workers' mid-morning teatime, I looked forward to a short visit with her. How was she managing all the responsibilities and work she had had to take on these last two years? I remembered another walk I had taken down this same path soon after our family had arrived at Macha Hospital in Southern province. We came at the invitation of the Brethren in Christ (BIC) Church of Zambia.

It was 1994 and I was unsure of myself with strangers but wanting to become friends with the group of Macha Church women who had crowded into Mutinta's living room to sing and pray with her. She was facing the imminent death of her beloved husband, Peter, who lay in the next room. She had already endured months of caring for him in his lingering illness. With sadness all around me, I felt uncomfortable, out of place. After all, I really didn't know Mutinta yet and would never know Peter. What was I doing there in that small, tin-roofed house? Then I reminded myself that one reason I had come was to be present with them. If I could not share their sadness and feel their pain neither would I know their joy nor how to share Christ's unreserved love for them—women living in a society not unlike Christ's own.

During the two years we were at Macha, I came to admire greatly Mutinta's integrity and Christian witness in her hospital work and her life in the medical staff community. Though suffering frequent attacks of malaria, she always had a smile or word of encouragement for me. Her husband was a miner in Zambia's northern copper mines when he became a Christian and answered the call to ministry. He trained in the Bible school and then pastored a BIC church. Well-known, widely respected and loved, Peter and Mutinta's faith and Christian testimony in the face of his early death was a witness to all who knew them.

After Peter's death, Mutinta chose to stay in the Macha Hospital community with her two young children. She was charge nurse of the obstetric ward and later the pediatric ward and one of the best-trained and dependable RNs. Her story is not unlike that of other women in the Macha Church commu-

MAB' E-ATUBA .P. HEALTH CLINIC

Zambian women wait to weigh babies at a rural clinic.

nity who have suddenly become single parents. They have few resources to meet school fees, the cost of food and everyday necessities.

By the summer of 1995 an extended drought led to critical food shortages. This was accompanied by a swift rise in the price of the staple corn and the disappearance of much of the local fruit and vegetables. Many of the hospital staff had to borrow against future salaries just to continue feeding their families. Mennonite Central Committee donated shipments of food which was distributed in a food-for-work program. Though the shipments alleviated much hunger, the shortages were too great. Rural clinics and the hospital began seeing malnutrition in young children and women.

During this time Mutinta took into her home four children of her brother who had died and whose wife was unable to care for them. Though they were well-mannered and helpful in the care of her two young children, many of us were dismayed to see their care and schooling added to Mutinta's burden. With typical perseverance and grit Mutinta began a new venture, baking bread for sale to the hospital staff. She showed me her work area, the brick oven (How, I wondered, did she bake such nice bread without a temperature gauge!) and finally, proudly, the homemade loaf tins for the orders she took for loaf bread.

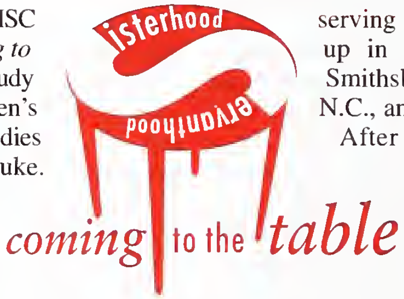
With acute embarrassment I thought of the numerous bread tins in storage—holdovers from the days when missionaries were supplied with basic household goods when they arrived. With fewer mission workers they were no longer needed. One of my jobs as guest-house hostess was to dispose of excess goods. The final garage sale of these items provided Mutinta with some additional tins.

I thought of Mutinta and other Macha friends when I read Henri Nouwen's Lenten reflection, *Called to Life, Called to Love*. He writes: "Life is a continuing process of the death of the old and the familiar, and being reborn again into a new hope, a new trust and a new love." In the face of adversity, their hope and faith is steadfast. When they pray for each other, feed those in need, when they spend time in quiet "sitting with" each other during times of pain and suffering, when they celebrate together, they do so with hope and the expectation of a better future. They live in the faith that the God who loves them is with them in their daily struggle.

Jean Hirschler and her husband, Richard, have served in Zaire, Taiwan and Zambia. They have three adult children; daughter Stephanie is still at home with them in Raymond, Wash.

Women's groups release study guide on sisterhood

by Eve MacMaster



In June WM and WMSC will release *Coming to the Table*, a new study guide featuring women's stories and Bible studies from Psalms and Luke. The booklet is the first of a two-part series on the theme "Sisterhood Servanthood." The second part is scheduled to appear next year.

The heart of the booklet is the devotional study called "Coming to the Table" written by Melanie Zuercher. She tells a dozen stories about women she has known and loved, most of them met while Zuercher was working in eastern Kentucky as a volunteer with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Melanie Zuercher

These stories will encourage readers to think about their own lives and to identify women who have played important roles in their formation.

Zuercher was born in Frankfurt, Germany, where her parents were serving with MCC. She grew up in Goshen, Ind.; rural Smithsburg, Md.; Durham, N.C., and Harlan, Ky.

After graduating from Goshen College in 1983, she worked for three years in Lancaster, Pa., as assistant editor for *Festival Quarterly* magazine before returning to eastern Kentucky as an MCC volunteer. She left Kentucky in 1993 to attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. She is a member of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa.

Zuercher is currently assistant editor of *The Mennonite* in Newton, Kan., the aunt of Alison, and lives in North Newton, Kan., with her cat, Will.

In addition to the Bible study, the 64-page booklet includes program helps for Easter and Christmas, a suggested reading list, clip art and other resources for women's groups.

To order *Coming to the Table* contact the WM office, 722 Main St., P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; (316) 283-5100; or the WMSC office, 421 South 2nd St., Suite 600, Elkhart IN 46516-3243; (219) 294-7131. A contribution of $4 U.S./$5 Cdn. is suggested to cover costs.

Women at worship

Worship at the integration meeting, Goshen, Ind., 1994

Women from First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, sing at a retirement home.

Making noodles for the MCC Relief Sale, New Hopedale Mennonite Church, Meno, Okla.

Women at work

Eden Mennonite church women, Moundridge, Kan., ready to serve lunch at a public sale

They prayed: “Involve us,
We now call that 80-year-old

▼ *The “Galatians 2:20” women’s group from First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif., 1915*

FIRST MENNONITE
CHURCH

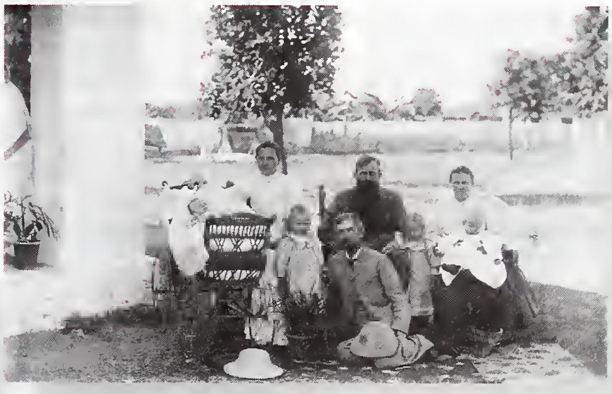
▲ *Mothers and daughters on retreat, Kansas, 1988*

Studying together in Fiske, Sask. ►

▼ *Quilters in Steinbach, Man.*

▲ *These are the soap makers ... (Rosthern, Sask.)*

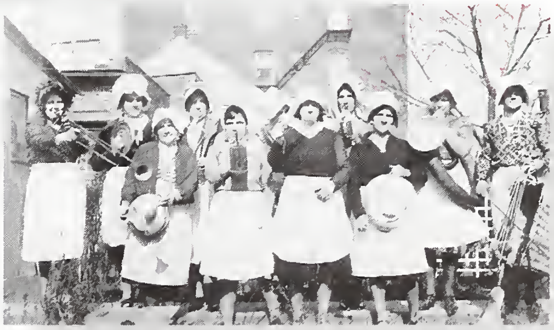
se our hands, our hearts.”
ganization Women in Mission.



Rev. P.A. and Elizabeth Penner and Rev. J.F. and Susie Kroeker and families, the first General Conference missionaries to India, 1902

The Ladies Aid Kitchen Band, Allentown, Pa., knew how to have fun back in the ’30s.

Purpose of *Missionary News and Notes* (Oct. 20, 1926): “to further missionary interest by imparting information and pleading for the prayers and gifts for our missionary friends.”



and this is the soap!

Bertha Harder, one who paved the way

by Miles Reimer, director of Mennonite Voluntary Service

Bertha Harder loves the church. That love has led her through a life of service in Italy, Egypt and the United States. She has had a passion for Christian education, teaching and creating curriculum at all levels from Sunday school to seminary.

Putting faith into practice was a strong part of her family culture. Her uncle, Henry A. Fast, a strong proponent of service who chaired the General Conference Emergency Relief Board, strongly influenced her childhood. In 1947 he stated, "With more personal involvement in serving the needs of the poor, Mennonites gained a new appreciation of the meaning and power of service 'in the name of Christ.'" Bertha's father was also heavily involved in community as he gave leadership to the Mountain Lake Elevator and Creamery Association for many years. He was also a member of the Minnesota State House of Representatives. Bertha's family modeled active involvement with the community in building the church.

Her early life was centered around the church. She has fond memories of singing all the way to church whether driving or traveling by sleigh through deep snow. She loved new and creative activity, singing in the choir, being involved in drama and teaching Sunday school. Her many involvements honed her natural gift of communication.

After high school Bertha acquired her teaching certificate and taught for a few years. In 1944 her desire to be involved in new and creative activity led her to take a Mennonite Central Committee term serving Jewish refugees in Italy and Yugoslav refugees in Egypt. The Jewish people could not believe that a Protestant woman could have such love for them. She established a children's kitchen in the refugee camp. The Jewish Refugees Women's Committee offered to do what they could with the rations provided, and the men made low tables and chairs for the children. Because they had been on the run, many of the children had never eaten at a table before. When the first meal was served the mothers stood outside with their faces pressed against the window and tears running down their faces.

After her return from Egypt in 1946, the General Conference asked Bertha to consider spending a few months traveling to Mennonite churches telling of her experiences. Bertha did not have to think twice about her answer.

At the same time there was a growing desire among some church people to put one vision of the church into practice and show fellow citizens that Mennonites were not just against war but for peace and service. "Why witness ... only when coerced by the state, why not do it without compulsion," said Elmer Ediger, an organizer of Civilian Public Service and many other service programs. He believed

Bertha Harder and husband Leland are now retired, living at Kidron Bethel Village in North Newton, Kan. They have two married sons and four granddaughters.

the time was ripe for a voluntary service program, and needed someone to share his vision with the congregations. Bertha was in the right place at the right time. Elmer asked her to combine her storytelling tour with sharing the opportunities of voluntary service (VS). Thus Bertha became the first director of the General Conference VS program. Bertha did not work out of an office, but developed relationships, visiting potential volunteers and VS units in Chicago, Montana and Saskatchewan.

In 1947 the Summer Service program had groups in four locations across North America. Most participants were women responding to the idea that they could do service outside their own communities. To this day most people participating in VS programs are women. VS was one influence in the creation of Women in Church Vocations in the late 1950s, an organization somewhat akin to the Deaconess movement, but allowing marriage and shorter-term commitments. It was a place where women could support each other in prayer and friendship.

After her period of traveling, Bertha returned to Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., to get her teaching degree. Josephine Kremer, an elementary school supervisor interviewing Bertha told her "you belong working for your church." That same week Bertha went to hear Andrew Shelly speak. He encouraged people to consider seminary. Bertha received both of those messages as a confirmation of call to take another step in her career in church work. She went on to Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago that fall. She graduated in 1950 with her Master's of Religious Education, the only woman in her class. While at seminary she met Leland Harder. They were married in 1951 and then pastored together at First Mennonite Church in Chicago for five years.

Shortly thereafter she was the first woman elected to the Board of Christian Service of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Correspondence to the board began with "Dear Brethren and Bertha." These and other traditionally male roles came to Bertha because of her obvious gifts and her love for the church. She is one who pioneered the way for women to assume roles of leadership and discipleship in the church.

Bertha has said yes to God's call to serve the church. She continues to be a tireless discipler and mentor. She is now teaching a 5th grade Sunday school class which includes an annual slumber party at her house. Thank you, Bertha, for sharing your gifts.

Miles Reimer is in his second year as Mennonite Voluntary Service Director. Miles and his wife Kathy Landis live in Newton, Kan., and worship at New Creation Fellowship.

Your contributions through WM have long supported the work of the Commission on Home Ministries.

A confession for youth

by Ann Weber Becker

While preparing for catechism meetings with a group of young people from my congregation, I frequently wished for a resource to help me. I had excellent books and curricula on my study shelf, but (in my judgment) none had the content and format together that I needed.

I was also serving on the committee that drafted the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. I tried using early drafts of the Confession in catechism classes with limited success. I often thought, "It would be great if someone would take this Confession and make it accessible to youth."

Susan Janzen of Faith & Life Press called in the fall of 1995, asking "Could you write a resource for a youth catechism based on the Confession of Faith?" By this time I was giving primary energy to homemaking (we have two young boys) and freelance writing and speaking. With delight, I was able to say yes.

In May 1996, eight people from across the General Conference and Mennonite Church met in Chicago to discern the form this resource would take. We agreed that it should be closely tied to Scripture and to the Confession. It should be usable by groups or individuals, in its entirety or in parts. I left Chicago ready to get started!

I began by paraphrasing the Confession's 24 articles. After the years helping to mull over the precise wording of the Confession, this exercise at first felt vaguely heretical! The paraphrase was critiqued by two other members of the Confession of Faith Committee: Helmut Harder and Lois Barrett. I paired each article with a biblical text.

Next, each session needed exercises to bring the material alive. Fortunately for me, Eleanor Snyder, General Conference director of children's education, has her office just two blocks from my home. She gave graciously of her time to help brainstorm exercises. A group of pastors and youth from my area gathered to review the sessions. Later, groups in Pennsylvania, Illinois and Minnesota tested materials. Each group had an impact on the final product. Witnessing their enthusiasm was energizing for me. But even more exciting was watching this study become sharper and more relevant with each new critique.

When the deadline arrived, I put the manuscript in the mail with a weary sigh of relief, and also a twinge of regret. This project and I had become friends. As this friend steps out of my life and into the life of your child, grandchild or young neighbor, please pray with me that their time together might be fruitful, meaningful and in a word, blessed.

Ann Weber Becker lives in Kitchener, Ont. Ann, who served as a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, is now a homemaker, freelance writer and speaker. She and husband Byron have two young boys.

WM lent support to the Commission on Education for the development of this youth elective, scheduled for release in June.

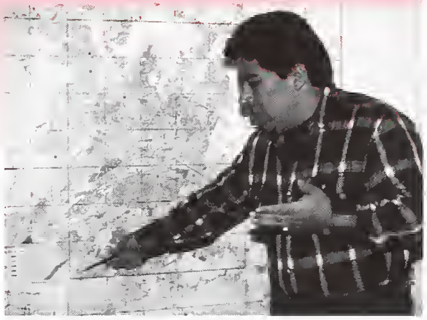
Reaching out in Mexico City

by Jorge Rodriguez, director of CUMA

CUMA, the program of the United Committee of Anabaptist Mission, began after a consultation between Mexican Mennonite churches and some Mennonite mission agencies. We had no formal budget, no missionaries and no specific church-planting projects when we started a program to plant new churches in Mexico City in March of 1991.

Now we have six projects (two in the last stage), a structure, a formal budget and most important, missionary teams. Pray with us for these projects:

- Vida Abundante Christian Community has 115 to 120 people attending; 12 are ready for baptism. Home growth groups (cell groups) and training new leaders are emphasized.
- Palabra de Gozo Christian Community has 60 to 70 attending with 12 in training to be leaders. Their main emphasis is reaching families through home growth groups. They are working to build a church.
- La Paz Mission started in September 1996 as an extension of Palabra de Gozo. Recently they had their first baptism and are preaching and trying to open homes to start growth groups.
- At Vida Nueva in Coyoacan some 70 people come to praise and worship in a rented school auditorium. Home growth groups, working with married couples and training new leaders are basic to this project.
- San Francisco Mission officially began in 1996 in a marginal area of the city. Bible study, pastoral care, Communion, free medical service, social service, evangelism and discipleship bring more than 30 people together. These are the very poor, some of them with carton houses and without basic services (water, drainage, electricity).
- El Pedregal Mission started in mid-1996. In addition to the missionary team, there are around 34 people in two growth groups. A strong emphasis on discipleship and some services to the community are the basic activities. This year's goal is to increase attendance at the main service and train new people to start growth groups.



Jorge Rodriguez points to mission areas in Mexico City.

We would like to start a new mission group in a middle-class area where for almost two years we have had a Bible study group. This is a new challenge because all the Mennonite churches in Mexico City are in poor communities. We now can say, God has been faithful to us. My conviction is, "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31).

WM funds have supported United Committee of Anabaptist Mission (CUMA)'s church planting ministry in Mexico City via the Commission on Overseas Mission.

Roundtable

by Susan Jantzen

Reflection on the ending of this women's organizations as we have known it.

My mother told me that I would find Women in Mission an affirming organization. Mom was right. I have been with you in every district and province of the United States and Canada. As I recall looking at your faces one impression stays with me: These women give to others because they know they have received from God.

I have also observed that you

1. agree to work for the church together in addition to acting individually,
2. see the benefit of interweaving service to others and support of each other in the group,
3. know the joy of learning about your community and world, and
4. understand the strength that comes with Bible study and prayer.

Sisters, let us praise our Creator together for all that Women in Mission has been, through God's life-giving love for us.

Let us welcome the future, living and loving with joy and confidence!

Church leadership training for women

Marcela Carvajal is a vibrant woman, eager to serve God. Originally from Colombia, she is studying in the Hispanic Ministries program at Goshen (Ind.) College. Her husband, Oscar, is studying at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. They have a young son. Marcela is a recipient of support from Women in Mission.

Susan Jantzen (left), WM coordinator, introduces Marcella Carvajal at joint WM/WMSC meetings in Elkhart, Ind.

Marcela writes: "I will be finishing the spring semester in three weeks. Thanks to God, everything has gone well for me in the Hispanic Ministries program. This weekend, God willing, we will be sharing with the brothers and sisters of Comunidad de Fe in Chicago. We are also very happy that we are going to be able to work for two months this summer with Comunidad de Fe Church. Our plan is to continue studying in September. My wish is to take three courses instead of two in the fall of 1997 and also three courses in the spring of 1998. My family and I are very happy and grateful to Women in Mission of the General Conference for their valuable support. Blessings to you!

Facts & figures

Election for integration of WM & WMSC

Thank you to all who have returned your ballots during April and May. We appreciate your being a part of these important decisions. Results of these elections will be announced at the General Conference sessions in Winnipeg and the Mennonite Church sessions at Orlando, both during July.

Staffing for the integrated organization

All current WM and WMSC staff have been invited to apply for the proposed new positions. These positions will be advertised in Mennonite periodicals.

Proposed timetable for new staff to begin:
Editor—August 1997
Executive coordinator—October 1997

Since 1973 *Window to Mission* has been the General Conference women's publication, preceded by *Missions Today* (1965-1973) and *Missionary News and Notes* (1926-1965). Assuming a positive vote toward integration, this will be the final issue of *Window*. A new integrated publication, published six times yearly, will likely debut in November.

Financial report

Thank you to all of you who have responded to our financial request! For Canadian women, GCWM financial support levels remain as they have been through this calendar year. For U.S. women we are asking $20 to $24 per woman. This replaces the $27 per woman requested in the past.

As our new organization takes shape (assuming a positive election result), you can expect to hear from the Newton office concerning financial support for the future. Our deep appreciation goes to each of you for your support at this important and exciting time!

Winnipeg '97—July 6-8

Transformed
IN CHRIST

Women in Mission display—Come by and see our display including photos from many of our women's groups!

Women's Mission banquet—The women's banquet will celebrate 80 years of Women in Mission and announce results of the election on integration of the women's organizations. Check the WM banquet box on your registration form. Child care will be provided at the banquet location (Bethel Mennonite Church). We look forward to seeing you!

Window shopping

Consider these ideas from one group's brainstorming session for planting seeds of interest in WM:

1. Each girl receives a wooden cross necklace from WM in the fall of her 7th grade year at a special WM dinner meeting.
2. Have a sleep over and wonderful breakfast for teenage girls, hosted by WM.
3. Mention accomplishments of girls from your church in your WM newsletter.
4. Arrange for each girl in the church to be adopted by a small group within the WM group.

Why? To let them know they are special to us and that WM can be special to them throughout their lives.

GATHERING SEED FROM A MEDIEVAL MOTHEROOT

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY '97

World Community Day, Nov. 7, 1997, is an annual worship service sponsored by Church Women United. This year's service will be a sharing of poetry, art, music and stories of our foremothers. It developed as members of the CWU Celebrations Committee shared readings, books, listened to the music and reveled in the art of Christian women from the Middle Ages.

For more information contact Church Women United, 475 Riverside Dr., Suite 500, New York, NY 10115, or call 1-800-298-5551.

- *Friendship Gifts of Good Taste*, edited by Anne Van Wagner Childs (Leisure Arts, 1991, $19.95 U.S.), is one of the "Memories in the Making" series. Believing that thoughtful words and actions help strengthen friendships, this book contains 34 quotations paired with instructions and recipes for a gift to a friend. This book would be a wonderful addition to your church library.
- *All Are Witnesses*, edited by Delores Friesen (Kindred Productions, 1997, $15.95 U.S./$19.95 Cdn.), is a collection of sermons by Mennonite Brethren women. Using Scripture and life experiences, the writers have shared what they have seen and heard of God's redeeming love, Christ's empowering grace and the Spirit's reconciling power.

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News

Secretaries see challenges for higher education

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Both the outgoing and incoming secretaries for higher education of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) see denominational merger as having a profound effect on their job.

As Marion Deckert prepares to retire June 30 from the position, he continues business as usual—planning conferences, gathering and disseminating information on Mennonite higher education and, of course, working toward integration.

"That has been one of the themes that has been ongoing, integration of the General Conference and the Mennonite Church (MC)," he says of his tenure in the position. "Working toward integration has been one of my major duties since I came to office four years ago."

Another highlight, he says, has been the church-college review, which took place between 1993 and 1995. The Higher Education Council's mandate is to enhance the relationship between the GC and its colleges, and the review was a major tool in examining that relationship.

Deckert headed up the review as one of his first projects as secretary. A seven-person committee spent three days each at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Bluffton (Ohio) College, talking with faculty, staff, students, board members and local church leaders to assess the status of the relationship between the colleges, the conference and the communities.

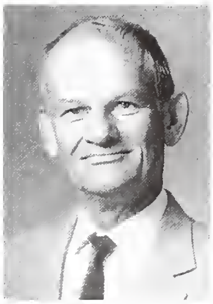
One of the challenges ahead, Deckert says, will be to work out a structure that can accommodate all the diversity in education on both sides (GC and MC).

"There are Canadian colleges that are quite different from U.S. colleges, there are GC colleges and MC colleges run by different kinds of boards, there are seminaries in Canada and the United States, there are high schools and grade schools on the MC side—all those from kindergarten to graduate school in all their glorious diversity will have to find some kind of a home together," Deckert says.

"That is a very complex task," he says. One of the major challenges in the years ahead will be to devise a structure that allows all those various kinds of educational ventures to relate to the church in a meaningful way. "That's a big challenge, one Dale [Schrag] will have to work on."

Schrag begins his duties as GC secretary of higher education July 1, and he already knows integration will be a key issue.

"Integration is a major agenda item, and I am optimistic for what the possibilities are," Schrag says. "I have a fundamental confidence that even in the higher education realm we're probably much more alike than we are dissimilar. I know that there are some sticky governance issues that will have to be addressed, but I'm hopeful and verging on confident that we can, as people of good will, find a way around that one in a manner that is satisfactory to all concerned."


Deckert

Schrag

A second issue that Schrag says he hopes the Higher Education Council can address is promotion of Mennonite higher education, articulating its case and looking into the possibility for some aggressive joint advertising and marketing.

"I think trying to raise the profile of Mennonite higher education is an important endeavor and fundamental for the future of the Mennonite church," he says.

Schrag says he believes the church and the colleges are in the same business. "I think the church and the colleges resemble each other much more than they are distinctive from each other, although I am clear that the church is not the college and the college is not the church. Now if we're in

Inside the news

Volunteers no longer homeless in Austin / p. 14

MBM family evacuated, couple remains / p. 14

Buskers to inject arts, energy into summer sessions / p. 16

Youth ministers call for one curriculum / p. 17

Gingerich named coordinator of Mennonite Men / p. 18

"Wade on In! Dancing at the Water's Edge" is a celebration of the spirit of inclusion in worship and the performing arts, to be held June 28-30 in LaVerne, Calif. For more information contact Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns at (612) 722-6906 or e-mail BMCouncil@aol.com.

* * *

The Link & Visitor reports that 9-year-old Caitlin Quail, who attends Durham (Ont.) Baptist Church, was so moved by the stories a missionary to Zaire told while staying at her house that she asked her friends to bring money for missions instead of gifts for her to her birthday party. (*ChristianWeek*)

* * *

The Tenth Annual Festival-Gathering of the Network of Biblical Storytellers will be Aug. 6-9 at Tipp City, just north of Dayton, Ohio. There will be storytelling, workshops and speakers for those interested in biblical storytelling for worship, ministry and spiritual life. For more information, contact the Network of Biblical Storytellers, 1810 Harvard Blvd., Dayton, OH 45406; 1-800-355-NOBS; (937) 278-5127; e-mail nobsint@united.edu.

On April 4, talk show host Jay Leno announced the creation of a scholarship for students who enroll in the automotive restoration program at McPherson (Kan.) College. The Church of the Brethren college is the only school in the Western Hemisphere that offers an associate in technology degree in automobile restoration. Leno is a car enthusiast and collector. (*Wichita Eagle*)

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The Supportive Congregations Network will be meeting at Winnipeg '97 and at the Mennonite Church's convention and general assembly in Orlando, Fla. The Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns is also sponsoring a gathering Oct. 3-5 near Calgary. For more information on any of these events, contact BMC, Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406-0300; (612) 722-6906; e-mail BMCouncil@aol.com; www.webcom.com/bmc/.

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An international conference on the architecture of Anabaptist-Mennonite worship spaces and places—"Bethaus, Meetinghouse, Church"—will take place Oct. 16-18 at The Meetinghouse, Harleysville, Pa. Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust and the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania are sponsors. Write 565 Yoder Road, Box 82, Harleysville, PA 19438, (215) 256-3020, e-mail mennhist@pond.com.

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A coalition of peace and justice groups called on the U.S. Congress in May to ban partial-birth abortion. The coalition, The Seamless Garment Network, is composed of more than 150 groups and includes Pax Christi USA, Sojourners and the Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians. The coalition takes its name from an idea of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, who said opposition to abortion isn't a single issue but is linked to opposition to the death penalty, war and other issues in a "seamless garment." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

the same business, we need to have avenues that would allow the churches a more active role in the life of the college."

Sacrifices and compromises: One of those avenues, he says, could be to expand and encourage churches' participation in more generous scholarship programs. "There are prices to be paid, there are sacrifices and compromises to be made as the church becomes more intensively involved, but my strong conviction is that the colleges cannot survive without the church. And I think the church would suffer seriously without the colleges for a variety of reasons."

Schrag, a native of McPherson, Kan., became Bethel College's director of libraries in 1984. In 1992 he assumed his current position as director of marketing and church relations.

Schrag will continue at Bethel two-thirds time as director of church relations only, devoting the other one-third time to the Higher Education Council.

Deckert, from Bloomfield, Mont., was on the faculty of Bethel College from 1972 until his retirement in 1996. From 1972 to 1986, he served "off and on" as academic dean and taught philosophy until retirement. His plans at this point are "just to try and enjoy life." *Cynthia Snider*

Volunteers no longer homeless in Austin

Austin, Texas (GCMC/MBM)—After being evicted from their home by the city of Austin in March, the Austin Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit and Shalom House have new homes.

MVS is jointly administered by the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) of the Mennonite Church.

After long searching, a small home was found to house the MVSers, much to the relief of the volunteers and the members of Austin Mennonite Church, who have helped sponsor the new unit here.

Late last month, the congregation of the Highland Park Baptist Church voted to allow Foundation for the Homeless, the sponsoring agency for Shalom House, to convert the church's parsonage into a residence for the families.

Shalom House is a shelter for pregnant women or families with infants who would otherwise live in a car or on the street. Counseling and prenatal care are a part of the program for those living in Shalom House.

"This situation could not be better," says Kathy Goering Reid, pastor of Austin Mennonite Church and interim local program coordinator for MVS in Austin. "Highland Park is donating the space, [asking] only a small donation for utilities. It is a much more permanent and safe place for the families."

"This situation could not be better."

Kathy Goering Reid

When the eviction notice came from the city, the MVSers and the residents of Shalom House shared a common residence, which was not a standard arrangement for MVS units. Now both the Shalom House residents and the volunteers have their own space.

The offices for Foundation for the Homeless have been housed in the parsonage of Highland Park Baptist Church and will have to move to accommodate the change in the parsonage to Shalom House facilities.

"Foundation offices will most likely move closer to downtown, and that is a better place for them to be situated," Goering Reid says. "Best of all, our MVSers have their own house."

MBM family evacuated, couple remains

Mazar-E-Sharif, Afghanistan (MBM)—With a renewed outbreak of fierce fighting in this northern city, MBM workers Sheryl and Steven Martin, Harrisonburg, Va., were evacuated May 29 with their infant daughter to Islamabad, Pakistan.

MBM workers Phyllis and William Miller, Goshen, Ind., decided to remain with a group of expatriate workers that included 11 other adults and 10 children.

This ancient city of 77,000 people was taken over May 24 by the Taliban Islamic militia. But the Taliban faced their first-ever armed challenge to rule in conquered territory May 28.

The Martins spent the entire night of May 28 in the basement of their house as machine-gun fire and artillery blasts shook the city and lighted the night sky. The Associated Press reported that hundreds were killed in the fighting between the Taliban forces, which control most of the country, and the anti-Taliban opposition.

During a lull in the fighting, the Martins traveled by car, accompanied by United Nations personnel, to the border of Uzbekistan, then flew to Islamabad, Steve Martin said in a telephone call to Alice Roth, MBM vice president for global ministries.

Perhaps providentially, MBM's monthly prayer calendar for May 30 focused on Afghanistan, urging readers to "Pray for a deep sense of God's presence in the midst of suffering."

The Martins returned to Afghanistan in August 1996. The couple had spent a year's study leave in Harrisonburg, following a previous four-year term in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. Bill and Phyllis Miller moved to Mazar-E-Sharif earlier this year after serving since August 1995 in neighboring Peshawar, Pakistan.

Mary E. Klassen

Goshen, Ind. (AMBS)—Five of this year's 32 graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary speak Spanish as their first language. So they helped lead the final hymn in Spanish: "Tu has venido a la orilla" ("Lord, you have come to the lakeshore"). Pictured, from left, are Jimmer Prieto, Zulma Prieto, Oscar Carvajal (with guitar), Ricardo Liso and Rafael Barahona.

One-fourth (eight) of the 1997 graduating class of AMBS come from outside North America: from Argentina, Australia, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines. Thirty-two students participated in the service, held May 23 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen. Twenty-eight received degrees (master of divinity, master of arts in peace studies or master of arts in theological studies), and four received certificates.

"I invite you to return to a time and place only you know, to the time when you first walked out of the shadows and into the light," Wilma Ann Bailey, commencement speaker, told the graduates. The associate professor of biblical studies at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., said, "I invite you to fall in love again with God, with the church and with the Scriptures." ***Mary E. Klassen***

Antonella Moccia, 30, former fashion model, joined the Sisters of the Holy Spirit in Frascati, Italy. She was inspired by poor people's dignity and commitment to Jesus. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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One of the 10 most-anthologized living poets in the United States will be the keynote speaker at a Mennonite writers conference at Goshen (Ind.) College. Denise Levertov will address participants at "Mennonite/s Writing in the United States," to be held Oct. 23-26 at the college. Levertov will join prominent Mennonite authors at the conference, including Julia Kasdorf, Jeff Gundy, Al Reimer, Jean Janzen, Dallas Wiebe, Omar Eby, Hildi Froese-Tiessen, Elmer Suderman, Janet Kauffman, Merle Good and Raylene Hinz-Penner. For information, write the English Department, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526, e-mail ervinb@goshen.edu.

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"Beer cans for Jesus" became the theme in David Haarer's mind as he biked last year and collected more than 5,000 cans along the road, says the *Gospel Evangel*. Haarer, a member of Michigan State University Mennonite Fellowship, bikes about 2,000 miles a year and had already earned enough from can refunds to buy a word processor, video camera and a golf cart. In 1996, however, Haarer decided to send the money he earned from can collection—about $500 U.S.—to Mennonite Central Committee for its work with refugees. Haarer calculated the cost of a single refugee meal to be about 10 cents per person, the same amount as the can refund. "I figured if Jesus can feed a crowd of 5,000 with a couple of dead fish and some bread," says Haarer, " I could do the same with empty soft drink and beer cans." (*Gospel Herald*)

The bounty for the death of Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, has been increased from $2 million to $2.5 million. An Iranian charity pledged the additional $500,000. Rushdie's book has been condemned as blasphemous against Islam. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

• • •

Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind., received the 1997 Anabaptist Health Care Award from Mennonite Mutual Aid. Kropf was recognized for her "continued commitment to developing creative resources to enhance the spiritual health and nurture of the church, modeling a holistic spiritual life and promoting the unifying power of God in our spiritual journey." Kropf is minister of worship and spirituality for Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, and writes the Learning to Pray column for *The Mennonite*.

• • •

For over a year, sewage from the Jewish settlement of Harsina, northeast of Hebron, has been gurgling onto Motaz al-Jabri's land, damaging his grapevines. He estimates that the lost grape harvests on the five acres would have been worth $30,000 (U.S.) per year. It will take about five years for new vines to return to current levels. The problem is that a sewage drain that runs under the fields has backed up and is discharging its contents, says al-Jabri. He first registered a complaint with the Israeli Defense Force a year ago. They assured him that it would be taken care of. Nothing has been done. Palestinians are not allowed to repair the drain because it belongs to the Israelis. Al-Jabri's land is in the Rous valley, a target for settlement expansion. The settlements of Harsina, Kiryat Arba and an Israeli military camp encircle the valley. Many homes in the valley have received demolition orders, and several have already been destroyed. (*Jeremy Bergen, Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

Quilting for conference

Transformed
IN CHRIST

David Habegger

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—At conference time, LaVeta Habegger of Fort Wayne, Ind., puts her love of quilting to work helping promote conference themes in the congregation.

"Prior to each conference," she says, "I make a wall hanging with the logo and themes of the upcoming conference. It is hung in the local church to help us be aware of the conference, and then I take it to the [meeting]." She is shown here with her quilted interpretation of the logo for the delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) to be held July 6-8 in Winnipeg.

Habegger made her first "logo wall hanging" for the joint GC-Mennonite Church assembly at Bethlehem, Pa., in 1983. She has also made them for the joint assemblies in Normal, Ill., in 1989 and Wichita in 1995 as well as for Mennonite World Conference gatherings in Strasbourg, France, in 1984 and Winnipeg in 1990. Before moving on to the respective conferences, the pieces have hung at Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita, Kan., and First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana, Ill., where LaVeta and husband, David Habegger, served in pastoral roles, and at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, where they are members.

Buskers to inject arts, energy into summer sessions

Winnipeg (GCMC)—How to inject some "aesthetic energy" into Winnipeg '97, the annual meeting of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) and the delegate sessions for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), which are likely to lean toward long, discussion-oriented days?

With live music, conference planners hope. They are scheduling miniconcerts and "buskers" during meal times.

According to the dictionary, a busker is "a strolling entertainer." Buskers are performers—usually musical—who play on the streets with hopes that passersby will stop to listen and toss a coin in the hat or guitar case.

Mennonite buskers made their Winnipeg debut a few years ago at the Mennonite Central Committee relief sale and auction. There, some performers played accordion or cello, and groups of young people sang folk songs and gospel choruses. Audience donations went to MCC.

At the Winnipeg conference sessions July 3-8, a number of buskers will perform outdoors during lunch and supper, next to the meal tents. Outdoor buskers scheduled are Terry Widrick of Selkirk, Man., on flute, as well as a guitar player, singers and others.

Some shows will take place as mini-concerts inside the sanctuary of Immanuel Pentecostal Church, says organizer Phyllis Wiebe, CMC administrative assistant. Indoor performers include the Faith and Life Women's Choir from Winnipeg and a North Kildonan (Man.) mixed quartet. Schedules for these events can be found in registration packets at Winnipeg, says Wiebe.

When asked why they are having

buskers, Wiebe says, "There is a lot of time between the afternoon sessions and the evening sessions, and many people won't have transportation to go anywhere." This gives them some entertainment options.

She says a number of people asked to perform at conference. But since the schedule is so tight during the working time, conference planners decided to slot the performers in during meals. "This gives these people an opportunity for exposure."

Youth and young adults: The biggest change for the youth convention is in the service component. They will redirect a lot of effort to doing flood relief, says Abe Bergen, GC director of youth ministry.

Record flooding of the Red River left many parts of southern Manitoba either torn apart or covered in mud. "We are adjusting to meet the needs in whatever way we can," says Bergen. "We will be working with MCC and Mennonite Disaster Service." Youth will spend three full days doing service projects.

On May 23, Bergen reported that registration for the youth convention stood at 475. He expects 500 or more youth on the campus of Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg.

Accommodations for youth at the college will be tight—and innovative. Many have elected to sleep in tents set up in the field beside the college, says Bergen. The youth-led worship sessions will be held outside under tents.

There are also some special activities for young adults. Late-night plans include going to local tourist attractions and cafes, says Doug Klassen, young adult ministries director for the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba.

Klassen is arranging for young adults to meet with leaders of each of the merging denominations, the GC and the Mennonite Church, to talk about the impact of integration on young adult ministry. *Aiden Schlichting Enns*

Youth ministers call for one curriculum

Newton, Kan. (GCMC/MBM)—Mennonite youth pastors meeting in Orlando, Fla., called for one Sunday school curriculum for high school youth (currently there are two, one from Faith & Life Press and one from Mennonite Publishing House) and for youth and young adults to be represented on the General Board of the new Mennonite Church.

The two dozen youth ministers from across North America met to work, plan, pray and play together during the three-day gathering April 22-25.

Tobin Miller Shearer and Regina Shands Stoltzfus of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries led anti-racism training sessions.

Under their leadership, the group worked through three goals: (1) coming up with a working definition of racism; (2) applying the definition to youth ministry; (3) suggesting principles for ongoing anti-racism work.

Anti-racism work with young people and youth groups should include "building up relationships, not air miles," said Shands Stoltzfus. She and Miller Shearer suggested a three-year moratorium on service projects that involve youth groups traveling a distance to do "hands on" service such as home repair or working in soup kitchens.

"Splash and dash" programs don't do anything for building relationships and accountability, the team noted. "We're not including helping with clean-up after natural disasters and similar short-term crisis intervention activities," Shands Stoltzfus said. *Carol Duerksen*

Tom Price (MBM)

Pray and play: *Miguel Cruz, a visiting musician, plays a trumpet solo during an April 25 worship service involving members of the Youth Ministry Council, who met in Orlando, Fla., April 22-25. The service was held at Iglesia Cristiana Ebenezer (Ebenezer Christian Church) in Apopka, Fla., the only Mennonite congregation in the metropolitan Orlando area.*

World church leaders met in Syria in March to propose a common date for Easter. Eastern and Western churches calculate the date differently. Leaders propose that from the year 2001, "the date of Easter be calculated by precise astronomical determinations, with Jerusalem, the site of Christ's death and resurrection, as the point of calculation." (*Mennonite Reporter*)

• • •

The campus of Goshen (Ind.) College is adorned with new purple bicycles, thanks to the efforts of the college's student senate. The bikes, formerly abandoned, were refurbished by student volunteers. They are kept unlocked, free for anyone to use within campus boundaries. Student senate president Anne Berry says, "It's a logical idea when you think about it—you get a bunch of old bikes and make them available for anyone to use. It strengthens the sense of community and sharing because everyone is responsible for the bikes." (*Gospel Herald*)

• • •

A factory worker was fired and other workers were intimidated May 12 after managers at the L.V. Myles assembly factory in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, found leaflets demanding better working conditions and pay. The company is one of 14 factories in Haiti making garments for Disney. Workers were asking for a pay raise and a reduction in the high quotas needed to earn more than the minimum wage of 36 gourdes ($2.15 U.S.) per day. To earn more than the minimum wage, a worker at L.V. Myles had to sew 1,500 to 1,800 Disney garments in a day, or one every 15 to 20 seconds during an eight-hour day with no breaks or lunch hour. Due to international pressure, Myles has now lowered daily quotas and added water fountains in the factory and benches in the yard for workers to sit on while eating lunch. (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

On April 16, Christian Peacemaker Teams member Wendy Lehman of Kidron, Ohio, was denied entry into Israel. Israeli authorities told her at the airport in Tel Aviv that she would not be allowed to enter the country. They put her on a return flight to the United States via Canada. Lehman was to have rejoined CPT's team in Hebron for three months. A veteran of the Hebron team, Lehman was arrested a number of times for nonviolently acting to prevent the confiscation of Palestinian land and the demolition of Palestinian homes by Israeli authorities. U.S. Consulate representatives in Jerusalem were reportedly not surprised by the action and speculated it may now be Israel's policy to turn others away as well.

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On April 15 at the Elkhart, Ind., post office, members of Christian Peacemaker Teams set up a polling place for taxpayers to vote on how the government should spend their money. The 418 people who participated in the poll decided that the military should only get one-fourth the share of the income tax dollar that it currently receives. Everyone passing by the post office was offered 10 pennies to put into one of six glass jars repre-senting how they wished federal income tax money would be spent. Categories included the environment, education, scientific research, the military, the arts, and housing/health care. Housing/health care received 29 percent of the pennies, education 26 percent, the environment 21 percent, the military 10 percent, scientific re-search 9 percent and the arts 6 per-cent. Actual military spending for 1996 was 42.9 percent of U.S. income-tax dollars (excluding trust funds like Social Security that are separate from income tax); 24.4 percent goes to current military spending and 18.5 percent to past military spending, including interest on the debt and veterans' benefits. (*Aaron Kreider and FCNL Washington Newsletter*)

Off the shelf

Betsy Headrick McCrae (MCC)

Thanks to the efforts of a former Mennonite Central Committee volunteer and her Vietnamese colleague, health professionals in Vietnam now have an illustrated, 220-page textbook on basic occupational therapy—written in their own language. As Gail Dick's MCC assignment in Vietnam drew to an end late last year, she set out to review the 2 1/2 years of training she had done with her colleague, Ms. Lien. As the two reread lesson after lesson, they ended up producing a professional-level textbook, something that hadn't previously existed in Vietnam. Ms. Lien is now using this material to train others who work with disabled children, particularly those with cerebral palsy. MCC has also sent copies to the rehabilitation departments of Vietnamese hospitals, pediatric treatment centers, medical schools and international agencies that work in the field of disabilities. The book was packaged with a spiral binding so it would be easy to photocopy and share with others. "I didn't want this to be a book that sat on someone's shelf," says Dick, who has now returned to Winnipeg.

Gingerich named coordinator of Mennonite Men

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Jim Gingerich, Moundridge, Kan., will become coordinator of Mennonite Men on Jan. 1, 1998.

Mennonite Men is the umbrella organization for men's groups in the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and runs Tenth Man, a program of fund raising and direct service in aid of church planting.

Gingerich replaces Heinz Janzen, North Newton, Kan., who retired from the half-time position earlier this year. Janzen has continued in a quarter-time interim arrangement, with Mennonite Men executive committee members filling in the other quarter time.

Gingerich has been pastor at First Mennonite Church of Christian in Moundridge since July 1971. He recently announced his resignation effective Dec. 31.

Gingerich served on the Integration Exploration Committee from 1989 to 1995. The committee formed at the joint GC-Mennonite Church assembly in Normal, Ill., in 1989 and functioned through the joint assembly in Wichita in 1995. He was also co-chair, with Carol Suter, of the GC Call to Kingdom Commitment congregational fund-raising campaign in the late '80s.

"I find it exciting to begin this challenge," says Gingerich. "It will be interesting to see what develops as integration proceeds. Although there is nothing comparable to Mennonite Men in the Mennonite Church, there are 214 MC churches wanting to receive information from Mennonite Men about its ministries."

Jim Gingerich

Record

COM—Commission on Overseas Mission
EMM—Eastern Mennonite Missions
MBM—Mennonite Board of Missions
YES—Youth Evangelism Service

DEATHS

Ruben Siemens, Rosthern, Sask., died April 17 at age 79. He served as pastor at First Church, Ransom, Kan.; Cedar Hills Church, Surrey, B.C.; Bethany Church, Watrous, Sask.; Zoar Church, Langham, Sask., and Emmaus Church, Wymark, Sask. In retirement he served as pastor at Whitewater Church, Boissevain, Man., and as chaplain at the Rosthern Nursing Home.

MINISTERS

Rusty Bonham was licensed as youth pastor at First Church, Newton, Kan., June 8.

Walt Braun was installed as pastor at Tofield (Alta.) Church April 27.

Brent Foster has ended as pastor at Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill.

J. Mel Janzen has resigned as pastor at Madison (Wis.) Church effective July 31.

Randy Klaassen has resigned as pastor at Altona (Man.) Bergthaler Church effective Aug. 15.

Chester Wiebe is ending as youth pastor at Rosthern (Sask.) Church July 31.

WORKERS

Mauricio and **Sara Chenlo** are beginning a five-year COM/MBM term in Ecuador. They will work with the Indian Theological Training Center and the national Mennonite church on the coast, and seek to form a new Mennonite community of believers in Quito.

Lowell M. Ewert, Portland, Ore., has been named director of peace and conflict studies for Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.

Edgar Stoesz, Akron, Pa., is chair of American Leprosy Missions' board of directors. Stoesz also is chair of Habitat for Humanity International.

Sandra Waltner, Salem Church, Freeman, S.D., is serving a six-month EMM YES term in Vancouver. She is helping develop a discipleship training center there for Mennonite young adults.

Executive director: Thurston Woods Village, Sturgis, Mich., has an immediate opening for an executive director of a Mennonite-sponsored retirement community. The individual will oversee current and future housing, health care and supportive services. Prerequisites include a Nursing Home Administrators License, a minimum of five years professional leadership experience and a master's degree in health care preferred. The successful candidate will be committed to Christian ministry, identify with and support the mission, goals and values of Thurston Woods Village, and possess strong management, interpersonal and communication skills.

Thurston Woods Village is a nonprofit Christian retirement community with 118 skilled-care nursing beds, 82 assisted living units and 33 HUD apartments, and $6 million annual budget. There are 120 full-time equivalent employees.

Send resume, salary history and references to **J. Randall King, 27440 Banker Street Road, Sturgis, MI 49091-9357; fax (616) 489-2491.**

ANNOUNCING:

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Price: $12.95 U.S. Available at:
Book ReViews, P.O. Box 214, North Newton, KS 67117
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Faith & Life Bookstores in Berne, Ind., and Newton, Kan.

Mennonite Board of Mission's department Media Ministries has changed its name to Mennonite Media. The Harrisonburg, Va.-based department of MBM has used the name Mennonite Media for several years in contacts beyond Mennonite circles to identify the denomination and the arena of work. Today, Mennonite Media encompasses an array of media materials for witness and outreach through radio, television spots and print ads for distribution on behalf of the Mennonite church in Canada and the United States.

• • •

One way to get rid of plastics not recyclable locally—for example, cottage cheese cartons or strawberry baskets—is to ship them back to the plastics industry. One family who does this finds it costs about $5 to send a big box of plastic items once a month, and advises including a note asking that the enclosed materials be recycled and that the industry make only recyclable plastics. Mail to Society of the Plastics Industry, American Plastics Council, 1275 K Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005. (*Windows East and West*)

• • •

Mennonite Health Services has awarded six Elmer Ediger Memorial Scholarships. The recipients each receive $1,000 for the 1997-98 school year for studies in mental health, counseling or developmental disabilities. The recipients are Jennifer Chappell Deckert, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Pearl Heppner, Waldheim, Sask.; Jeanine Janzen, St. Catharines, Ont.; Jeannie Lockinger, Harrisonburg, Va.; Fay Magee, Waldheim, Sask., and Jeffrey W. Smith, Elkhart, Ind. Contributions to the Elmer Ediger scholarship fund can be sent to 2160 Lincoln Highway East, Box 6, Lancaster, PA 17602-1150; or to MCC Canada Mental Health and Disabilities Program, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9.

Savo(u)ring the seminary

Mary E. Klassen

What are Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary students Sally Weaver Glick, left, and Dawn Yoder Harms studying so diligently during their mid-morning class break? The AMBS cookbook, *Seminary Samplings: Savour the Spirit,* unveiled May 14.

Everyone at AMBS was invited to share recipes, and stories to accompany them.

One of the coordinators, Ruth Boehm, Winnipeg, pointed out the international dimensions of the cookbook—even in its title. On the cover (which Ruth created) is the word "Savour," while the introduction (written by Maribeth Longacre of Barto, Pa.) uses "savor." Carmen Brubacher, St. Catharines, Ont., was the third member of the team.

More than 150 recipes fill the book, including Sopa de Ahuyama, Argentine Guiso, Nelson's Own Salad Dressing, Grandma Longacre's Apple Pie, Eric's Bean Soup and Craig's Chili. *Mary E. Klassen*

Mennonite Central Committee
invites applications for the position of:

Director of Administration and Resources

This position carries much of the responsibility for the administrative function of the organization.

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Phone: 717-859-1151 • Fax: 717-859-2171
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Mennonite Central Committee

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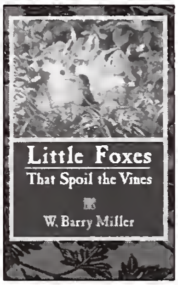

Each chapter of this beautiful little book presents a different fox that ruins relationships with God, with others, and with oneself. The gray fox comes with hurtful words. The blue fox of depression burrows into our homes and so on! **W. Barry Miller** provides counsel and scriptural resources for a speedy recovery from the attacks of these foxes.

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Reviews

BOOKS

PASTORAL IMPACT

Empowering Ministry: Ways to Grow in Effectiveness *by Donald P. Smith (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996, 227 pages, $21.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Marvin Zehr, Western District conference minister, North Newton, Kan.

This book is the result of an extensive study involving pastors and lay leaders in the Presbyterian Church. However, the insights gained from the study are relevant to pastors and congregations in other denominations, including Mennonite churches.

The study sought to learn what it is that makes a pastor effective in ministry. Out of all this analysis "it became clear that the one focus of ministry that relates most clearly to all other possible measures of effectiveness is a focus on empowering others."

Empowering pastors are able to empower others because "they themselves have been empowered." Empowering pastors are people who want to continue to grow and who are able to create a climate for others to grow. The author claims it is the pastor who makes the greatest impact on the climate of a congregation.

An empowering and effective pastor does not mean a pastor is perfect. Rather, an effective pastor is one who is in touch with his or her own gifts and weaknesses and does not use gifts to control others nor feels the need to be defensive in the face of weakness. The author draws heavily on the writings of Stephen R. Covey and applies these insights to pastoral and congregational ministries.

The final chapter of the book is a step-by-step exercise in helping a pastor toward growth and effectiveness. The exercises contain aids for reflection and questions to assist in evaluation of strengths and needs. This chapter would be well suited for a personal spiritual and growth retreat of a day or two.

The author gives numerous examples calling the reader's attention to the fact that "who a pastor is makes a greater impact on the congregation than what a pastor does." While this does not minimize the importance of pastoral training and skills, it does call attention to the importance of the personal qualities of a pastor and the impact of these qualities, or lack of them, on one's ministry. The book also affirms that pastors can improve not only their training and skills, but can also, with concerted effort, improve their personal qualities. This book is a valuable tool toward that end. I commend it to any who desire to be effective and transforming pastors.

FOCUS ON FUNCTION

Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church *by Loren B. Mead (Alban Institute, 1996, 100 pages, $12.25 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Erick Sawatzky, Elkhart, Ind.

It is a debatable point. Do we think and speak most about the functions of the church or about being the church? In his latest and most focused book in a three-part series on the once and future church, Loren Mead again chooses to weigh in on the function side of the conversation.

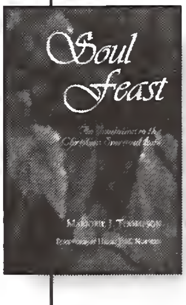
In previous works, Mead spoke about the functions that have marked the life of the church in earlier generations and described the key functions for the life of the church in any generation. He assessed today's church as being in trouble and needing transformation, especially in understanding and practicing mission, in order to be relevant and faithful. *Five Challenges* continues to speak to that concern.

The church of the future, Mead says, must (1) transfer ownership from the ordained clergy to the laity; (2) find new structures (other than centralized bureaucracies) to carry the faith; (3) discover a passionate spirituality that connects knowledge of God with experience of God; (4) feed the world's need for community and hence alleviate loneliness and isolation; (5) become or bring to birth an apostolic people, where individual believers are in active mission.

Mead paints a stark picture. The road ahead will not be easy. He wonders if there is enough time to make the necessary changes.

Even so, I wonder whether Mead cuts deep enough. Is he able to get beyond his "mainline church" assumptions and conceive of a faithful church that makes its contribution and impact on society as much by being faithful as by performing certain functions for society? In other words, is Mead's focus on functions a trap that will only serve to draw the future church into a recycled blend of church and culture? Questions aside, Mead raises profound issues for the church. He is well worth reading.

WJK SPIRITUALITY



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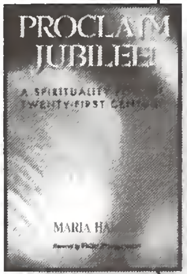

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WORSHIP FOR EVERYONE

Emmaus Eyes: Worship with the Mentally Challenged *by Lo-Ann and David Trembley (Eden Publishing, 1996, 87 pages, $14.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Doreen Neufeld, Kitchener, Ont.

How homogeneous is your congregation? Are people of different races and nationalities involved? Are there people who happen to be mentally challenged? How does worship planning take individual differences into account?

Lo-Ann and David Trembley, founding co-pastors of Broken Walls Christian Community, an integrated inner-city congregation in Milwaukee, minister to a significant contingent of people who happen to be mentally challenged. Rather than hiding them away or ignoring their presence and needs, the Trembleys have recognized the important contribution they can make to the rest of the congregation. In this book they address specifically the question of how to plan worship that includes them, while meeting the needs of the entire congregation.

The Trembleys make it a point to speak not of "the mentally challenged" but of those "who *happen to be* mentally challenged." In their words, "The message is that mental challenge is not the distinctive characteristic of the person; it is simply one of the characteristics which happen to be true."

To involve such people in worship in an authentic way, the Trembleys suggest that we need to put "P-E-P" into worship; that is, to make it Personal (provide specific experiences of abstract concepts), Emotional (deal with the range of human emotions—shout our joy and wail our grief) and Physical (include human touch, as well as concrete objects).

Most congregations will need to make changes if they are to take this call seriously. The Trembleys outline what some of the changes might be and also suggest ways of responding to the segments of the congregation for whom these modifications may be difficult to accept. A key question is, What is the goal of worship? Is it only to comfort folks and "charge their spiritual batteries," or is it also to challenge and empower Christians to be "more loving, joyous, peaceful, patient, kind, good, humble and self-controlled"?

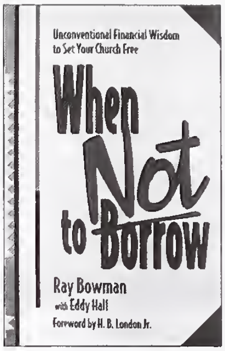
Five worship plans and a Passion play that take the needs and gifts of people who happen to be mentally challenged into account are included in this easy-to-read, provocative, helpful booklet. Clearly the issue is one we, as followers of the Christ who saw the value in everyone, cannot ignore.

CHURCHES AND MONEY

When Not to Borrow: Unconventional Financial Wisdom to Set Your Church Free *by Ray Bowman with Eddy Hall (Baker Books, 1996, 139 pages, $9.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Richard W. Minder, Newton, Kan.

Ray Bowman could have titled his latest book "How Not to Borrow." Bowman and co-author Eddy Hall devote relatively few pages to the "when" of church financial management. Instead, this book contains a wealth of valuable advice on how to chart financial decisions. Each chapter ends with a survey to provide reality checks on church debt, budget priorities, giving patterns and a congregation's financial potential for ministry.


Unconventional Financial Wisdom to Set Your Church Free
When Not to Borrow
Ray Bowman
with Eddy Hall
Foreword by H. B. London Jr.

Bowman directs his expertise as a church architect and planning consultant to everyone in the church. This conversation with the community reflects a wise perspective on congregational financial life. He regards the church not as a building or an institution but as a holy communion of individual and collective ministry. He gives sound advice combined with a call for ministry to those in need. Advice thus becomes wisdom.

Wisdom stands on its own combination of common sense and passionate concern. Unfortunately, though predictably, the book is laced both with gratuitous scriptural reference and bogus analogies that have no relevance to the advice. For example, in the chapter "The Hidden Costs of Debt," the authors list four consequences of church debt, continually relying on scriptural "reasons" to avoid debt. Besides forcing dubious, even nonexistent, cause and effect relationships, Scripture used in this fashion lends no strength to otherwise perfectly legitimate fiscal management discussions.

Nevertheless, a Believers' Church should have no difficulty holding in view this wise resource for financial

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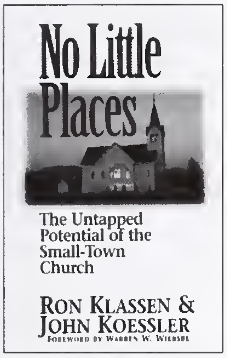
ACT YOUR SIZE

No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church
by Ron Klassen and John Koessler (Baker Books, 1996, 122 pages, $10.99 U.S.)

Reviewed by Louise Wideman, Hesston, Kan.


No Little Places
The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church
RON KLASSEN & JOHN KOESSLER
FOREWORD BY WARREN W. WIERSBE

Authors Klassen and Koessler draw on their own first-hand pastoral experience in small towns as the birthplace for this book. Woven between the narrative examples of discoveries these pastors made in their pastorates, one finds the nuts and bolts for ministry in rural and the ever-increasing "rurban" communities. They speak candidly about the importance of learning to understand and adapt to the culture of a small community rather than trying to impose suburban or large-church culture onto a small church.

They develop the idea of the "rurban" churches—churches in small towns whose attendance is increasingly attracting professionals seeking large-church ways of working with a small-town homey feel.

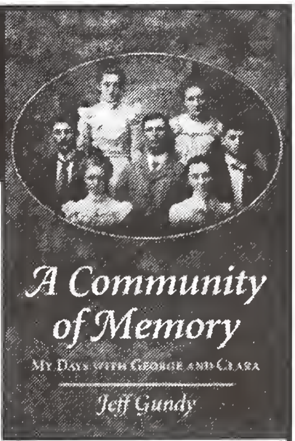
Perhaps the greatest truth gleaned from this book is that a church must act its size and know its limitations—whatever its size. A small church cannot be a mini version of a large church. It must capitalize on what it does best: intimacy and involvement.

This book reads easily and quickly and is highly recommended for people considering life and leadership in the small town. It may also be useful for people in mid-size to large churches who need assistance naming those qualities that are characteristic of small churches.

Nanny position: Children 8 and 12. Salary negotiable, minimum $6.50/hr. **Call (316) 682-1661.**

Resources

- **The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics** by Joseph J. Kotva (Georgetown University Press, 1996) is now available in paperback for $22.95 U.S.
- **Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger (20th anniversary edition)** by Ronald J. Sider (Word, 1997, $14.99 U.S./$21.50 Cdn.) gives new perspective on our responsibility to the poor and includes comparisons of where we are today compared with 20 years ago.
- **Sacramental Cocoa and Other Stories from the Parish of the Poor** by Lynn E. Perry (Westminster/John Knox, 1995, $14 U.S.) contains the author's experiences with the poor who, like those more prosperous, long for connection with God.
- **Racial Conflict & Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective** by Andrew Sung Park (Orbis, 1996, $18 U.S.) uses the Korean term "han" to describe the suffering brought by racial oppression, and suggests ways to understanding and promote healing.
- **Creative Resources for Bulletin Boards in the Early Childhood Classroom** by Judy Herr and Yvonne Libby (Gryphon House, 1997, $19.95 U.S.) provides patterns for 50 bulletin boards, indexed according to theme, with a list of developmental goals.
- **Table Talk: Story-sharing for Families** by Carole M. Eipers (Sheed & Ward, 1997, $24.95 U.S.) contains reproducible pages that are guides for family sharing times. Topics include family heritage, vacations, pets and more.
- **Alternative to the Pentagon: Nonviolent Methods of Defending a Nation** by Franklin Zahn (Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1996, $16.95 U.S.) poses an imaginary scenario of an invasion and shows how it could be defeated nonviolently. The book also includes real instances where nonviolence was used successfully.
- **Finding Joy: A Practical Spiritual Guide to Happiness** by Dannel I. Schwartz with Mark Hass (Jewish Lights, 1997, $19.95 U.S.) explores how to find joy through an approach based on "kabbalah," traditional Jewish mysticism.
- **Raising Kids Who Care: About Themselves, About Their World, About Each Other** by Kathleen O'Connell Chesto (Sheed & Ward, 1996, $12.95 U.S.) shows that empathy for others is the foundation for ethical behavior, and coaches parents in skills to help motivate kids.
- **The Original Jesus** by Tom Wright (Eerdmans, 1996, $20 U.S.) is for people studying the "historical Jesus" for the first time.



A Community of Memory

My Days with George and Clara
JEFF GUNDY

"Jeff Gundy has found a way to bring Mennonite theology and culture into conversation with the 'new thinking' in his academic fields of creative writing and literary theory. Other Mennonite writers, artists, historians and intelletuals should take note."
— *Mennonite Quarterly Review*

"Gundy has used his research into his family's history to re-create voices from his past. He starts with his Amish and Mennonite ancestors, who immigrated to Ohio and Illinois from Alsace and Bavaria in the 1830s, and continues through four generations to his great-grandparents George and Clara Gundy." — *Library Journal*

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Editorial

That's enough

I write this during the "penalty phase" of the trial of Timothy McVeigh, who was recently convicted of bombing the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City two years ago. The jury is hearing testimony from McVeigh's family and associates who hope to save him from the death penalty.

During the first part of this phase, I listened to radio news reports on the testimony of survivors and family members of victims (fatalities) of the bombing. Not since the Persian Gulf War have news media accounts made me so angry or so sad.

At breakfast one morning the radio reporter felt it necessary to describe in vivid detail the testimony of a doctor who'd had to crawl into the rubble of the bombed building to amputate the leg of a woman who could not have been freed without the procedure. It was an appetite suppressant not simply for its gory detail but because of how starkly symbolic it was of how I felt manipulated by the media to see McVeigh as a monster who couldn't have cared less who suffered on account of his personal beliefs.

That evening I watched *Dead Man Walking*. It tells the story of Sister Helen Prejean, who struck up a friendship with a death row inmate (in the movie a composite of several men on death row with whom Prejean worked), convicted of raping a young woman and murdering her and her boyfriend. Prejean also learned to know the victims' families and to sympathize with their pain and anger—which did not shake her opposition to the death penalty.

Who decides? In one scene Prejean talks with her religious superior at the prison, Father Farley, and the painful ambiguity of the death penalty speaks for itself. The priest quotes Scripture at Prejean, including "Thou shalt not kill" from the Decalogue. Who decides? Is the U.S. justice system presuming to be God, to say that because it judges a certain crime to be awful enough, the system can override "thou shalt not kill" for some kind of "greater good"?

Jesus is a prime example of one who was sentenced to death unjustly. While there is no comparison between Jesus and Tim McVeigh, except that both are God's children, Jesus' death and life taught us that ultimate faith in God means leaving judgment and justice up to God and not assuming deity ourselves. After all, even if Tim McVeigh gets "life" in prison, has he not sentenced himself to "death" by his own actions? What kind of life will it be, to live as long as he's conscious with the knowledge of what he did? Would lethal injection be a superior judgment here?

Furthermore, who is guilty? When the criminal case was being tried, to determine if McVeigh detonated the bomb that killed 168 children, women and men, there was much talk about whether or not he acted alone. One defense strategy was to try to make the case that he didn't. The jury decided otherwise and convicted him.

Awful irony: But he didn't act alone. Tim McVeigh once served in the military. In fact, he went to Iraq to fight in the Persian Gulf War. Christian Peacemaker Teams has pointed out the awful irony that the U.S. government, who in the form of the military taught Tim McVeigh to kill—and not care that he killed—now seeks to kill him.

So the U.S. government bears some responsibility for the deaths in Oklahoma City. And the U.S. government team prosecuting McVeigh is happy to see the media portray him as having no regard for the lives of innocent children, women and men as long as his "statement" was made. Meanwhile, the U.S. government is holding hostage North Korean children, women and men facing imminent starvation by saying it will send no significant food aid until the "enemy" North Korean government sits down at the negotiating table with the United States and South Korea.

How does this editorial fit into the "World of Enough" theme in this issue's feature section? There was no need for a war in the Persian Gulf—except for the demands of an affluent North American lifestyle for oil and oil products, regardless of cost. And the cost was a military that taught Tim McVeigh to kill and perhaps led him to end 168 lives and irrevocably shatter countless others. It's our government, our tax money, our elected officials, our society's insatiable consumer appetite, our fearful grasping of material possessions—and our responsibility. When will we say, "That's enough"? *Melanie A. Zuercher*

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Do women pray differently from men? / p. 11

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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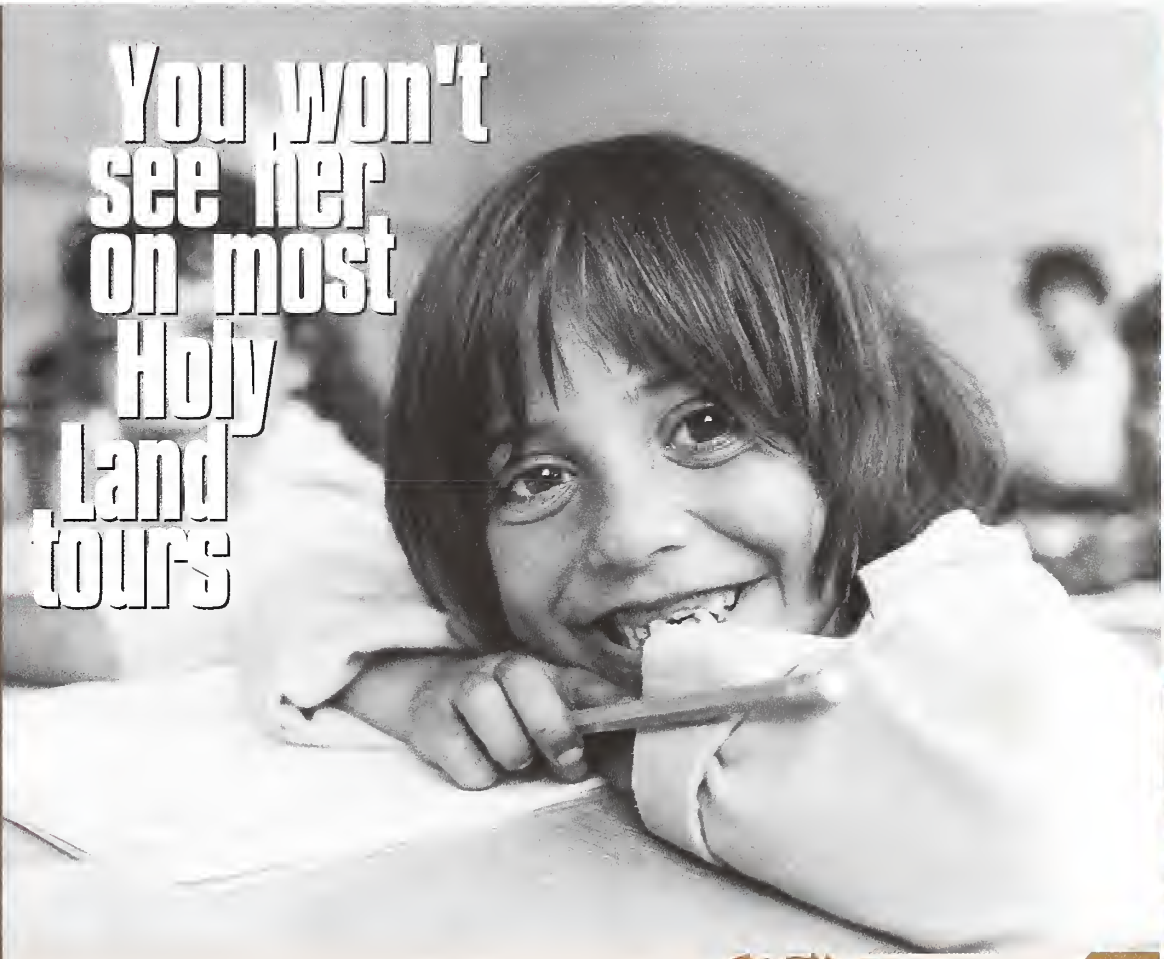
JULY 8, 1997

- Get off the tour bus (page 3)
- Criteria for choosing agencies running Holy Land tours (page 5)
- A holy land torn by division (page 6)

You won't see her on most Holy Land tours



The hidden agenda of tour guides in the Holy Land

Prologue

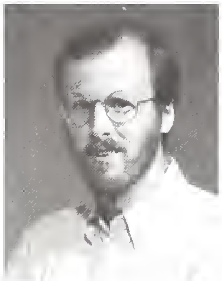
Although most people have not and will not be on a tour of the Holy Land, Kathleen Kern's article about Holy Land tour guides (page 3) has important lessons for us all.

One lesson, simply put, is, Don't believe everything you see because you may not be seeing everything. Further, especially with regard to events in the Middle East, don't believe everything you read in your newspaper (or even in your church paper). We all need to learn to think critically and to hear from all sides in a conflict. And as disciples of Jesus, we want to be ruled by love, not by fear.

Sydney Stigge, a college student, offers her reflections from being in the Holy Land (page 6). She saw division and felt pain.

Melanie Zuercher profiles Patty Shelly (page 8), who is country director for Mennonite Central Committee in Jerusalem. Read about her journey from the pastoral ministry to teaching in a college to her current position.

Will Braun has taken to heart the lesson of getting off the main roads and meeting people where they live (page 10).



Columnist Marlene Kropf asks if women pray differently from men (page 11). Talk about it in your Sunday school class or prayer group.

This issue will be mailed during the General Conference sessions in Winnipeg. Look for news of that event in our next issue. *gh*

Next issue: Inclusive language

Cover: Photo by Peter Williams (WCC)

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Most tour guides in the Holy Land will limit what you can see because of a political bias.

Get off the tour bus

Christians should resist the easy and cheap tours subsidized by the Israeli government.

Kathleen Kern

At the last moment I had decided to attend the Mennonite choral group's concert in Jerusalem. As I waited to enter the sanctuary of the church where they were performing, I chatted with a representative from World Vision. The choral group had sponsored a needy child near Hebron through World Vision.

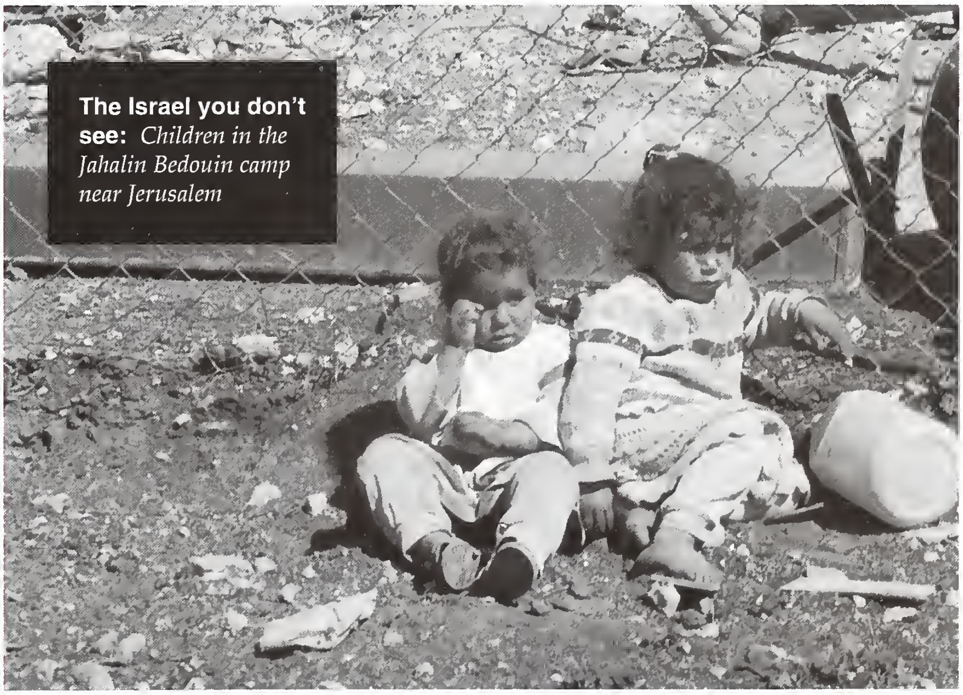
This particular young woman had planned to accompany the choral group down to Hebron and introduce them to the child, but their Israeli tour guide had told the director that it was far too dangerous for the group to travel to Hebron.

The World Vision representative told me she had then asked the choir director whether they had visited Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Jerusalem yet. The director said that their Israeli tour guide had told them it was far too dangerous for them to go into East Jerusalem to visit MCC headquarters because there were so many Arabs there.

The World Vision representative concluded, "And I said to myself, These are Mennonites?"

Lives in danger: A missionary couple living in Hebron told me they had heard cousins were coming to visit on a Holy Land tour and had said they would call once they got to Jerusalem. The missionaries told their cousins they would drive up to Jerusalem and bring them back to visit Hebron. They never received the call.

Some time later the missionaries contacted their cousins and asked why they had not called them from Jerusalem.



The Israel you don't see: *Children in the Jahalin Bedouin camp near Jerusalem*

Gordon Houser

As well as doing a favor to their consciences, Christians will find that alternative travel arrangements will allow more time to appreciate the beauty of the Holy Land and more time to visit with the Israelis and Palestinians who live there.

"Oh, our Israeli tour guide told us that we would be putting your lives in danger if we called you," the cousins said.

Political slant: Try as one might, no one can escape politics when traveling in the Holy Land. Christians may want merely to walk where Jesus walked, but in reality, where they stay, how they travel and to whom they speak will put a political slant on their experience.

Legendary Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan is reported to have said, "I'd rather have an Arab in the cockpit of an F-14 than at the microphone of a tour bus." To keep such a disaster from happening, the Israeli government has consistently refused to grant Palestinians tour guide licenses since 1967. Those who take people on tours anyway may face heavy fines and imprisonment

Most Christians who have taken tours run by Israeli guides have found that they rarely come into contact at all with Palestinians during these tours.

Their guides will take them to visit the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, the Upper Room in Jerusalem and the Mount of the Temptation in the Judean Desert, but they will not allow time for people on the tour to speak with Palestinians living in the areas where these sites are located. Christians from North America thus miss the opportunity to visit Palestinian Christians—members of the oldest Christian community in the world.

Christian Zionists: There are Christian tours, of course, run by organizations such as Bridges for Peace, the International Christian Embassy or people like Jerry Falwell. These tours put the Holy Land into the millennial perspective of the Christian Zionist movement.

Christian Zionists believe that before Jesus can return, all the world's Jews must immigrate to Israel. After that happens, they interpret Zechariah 13:7-9 to mean that two-thirds of them will die, and the rest will convert to Christianity. They also interpret Genesis 12:3 and Numbers 24:9 to mean that God will bless those who support the nation state of Israel and curse those who do not. As a result, the Christian Zionists are often far more supportive of repressive Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza than is the average Israeli.

Like Israeli tours, Christian Zionist tours aim at reducing contact between international Christians and Palestinians as much as possible. In December 1995, when the Israelis transferred Bethlehem to Palestinian control, the Christian Embassy called on Christian tourists to boycott the Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem and visit instead the Israeli settlement of Efrat on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

Why then do so many Christians go on these tours designed to permit only an Israeli perspective? Often these tours are cheap, particularly when tourism is down as the result of political unrest. A pastor who came on one of the Christian Peacemaker Team delegations to Israel/Palestine reported that he could have gone on one of these 10-day tours for pastors for $400—which would have included airfare, hotel and food.

Tour companies can afford to offer these rates because they are subsidized by the Israeli government, which owns El Al airline and most of the major hotels. Pastors are eligible for especially cheap rates, because the Israeli tourism industry hopes these pastors will in the future lead tours comprised of paying members of their congregations. (Often, if pastors can muster up a certain number of people on future tours, their expenses are completely paid.)

Another reason for the cheap rates has to do with propaganda. These pastors will return home having seen the Holy Land from an exclusively Israeli perspective. They will have met Israelis as human beings, but not have met Palestinians; they will tell their churches how unfair the media are to the Israelis. People who have not been to Israel/Palestine will generally accept the word of someone who has been there over what they read in the news.

What then should Christians do who wish to walk where Jesus walked? By all means visit Israel and Palestine, meet their peoples and appreciate their fascinating histories. However, Christians should resist the easy and cheap tours subsidized by the Israeli government. Just as people of conscience have boycotted farm products cultivated under subhuman conditions and products by companies (such as Nestle's) that have gone after profits at the expense of people's lives, people should not support the Israeli occupation with their tourism dollars.

As well as doing a favor to their consciences, Christians will find that alternative travel arrangements will allow more time to appreciate the beauty of the Holy Land and more time to visit with the Israelis and Palestinians who live there.

If you want to walk where Jesus walked, after all, you have to get off the tour bus.

Kathleen Kern, Rochester, N.Y., works in Hebron with Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Criteria for choosing agencies running Holy Land tours

At least 50 percent of your time in the Holy Land should be spent with Palestinian tour guides in traditionally Palestinian areas such as Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jericho. Anything less will not give you a balanced view of the Holy Land. It is unacceptable to choose a 10-day tour with an Israeli guide who allows you to spend two hours at the end of your tour talking to a Palestinian or a representative from a church agency working with Palestinians.

- As a corollary to this rule, if the tour takes in an Israeli festival or cultural event, then it should also take in an Arabic/Palestinian one. It is important to see that both Israeli and Palestinian cultures are equally rich and varied.
- If the tour takes the group to Israeli settlements to meet the people living there, it must also take the group to Palestinian villages near these settlements to visit with their inhabitants. It is important that your tour guide makes the connection between proximity of a settlement and restriction of the water supply in Palestinian villages. It is important to understand whose land has been confiscated and whose homes have been demolished for the expansion of these settlements.
- Tours should never include trips to Israeli military bases or encampments.
- The travel agency should offer some options for tourists who want to explore the area on their own (e.g., they should have information regarding where to find taxis).
- Travel agencies should never caution against going into specific areas simply because Arabs live there.
- Tour guides should make a point of introducing your group to Israelis and Palestinians who have actively promoted human rights and who have worked for a just and egalitarian relationship between the two peoples. Normally, human rights workers will give you the most lucid political analysis of current events in Israel and Palestine. *Christian Peacemaker Teams*

For information on alternative tours

Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680, has a packet of information for people who wish to make alternative tour arrangements in the Holy Land.

Using material from Americans for Middle East Understanding, the packet includes a directory of tourist agencies, hotels and resource people who will give the pilgrim a deeper understanding of Israel and Palestine. The packet also contains the December 1996 issue of *The Link*, with the articles, "Slouching Toward Bethlehem 2000," "When Family Land Is Confiscated," "Bethlehem's Struggle Against the Long Odds of a Stacked Deck," "The Tale of Two Holy Land Tours" and "The Cost of a Free Ticket." The issue contains a bibliography and list of places to visit in Bethlehem not found in the average guidebook.

As we seek to walk where Jesus walked, we must not close our eyes to the pain around us.

A holy land torn by division

Sydney Stigge

CPT photo

Guns everywhere: *An Israeli Defense Force soldier in Hebron*

Tourists go to Israel to witness the holiness of the land, focusing on rebaptisms in the Jordan River and visits to the sites where Jesus walked. While they close their eyes in worship, they often close their eyes to the pain around them. And they close their eyes to the divisions that have been there for thousands of years.

Even the sacred Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which houses the tomb of Christ, is as segregated as Israel itself. Carved niches circle the cave; one is the Roman Catholic chapel, one is the Coptic chapel, another is Armenian, yet another Greek Orthodox, with the Ethiopian Orthodox on the roof—a Muslim holds the keys to the church doors. Each fights for a place to worship; each builds walls to separate itself from the others.

Mount Tabor, the place of the transfiguration of Christ, offers one of the most beautiful views in the world. Like the Holy Sepulchre, it mirrors the divisiveness of this land.

Upon the mountaintop lie two monasteries, separated by a lush green pasture—and a barbed-wire fence. One monastery is Roman Catholic; the other is Greek Orthodox. Centuries ago, when invaders attacked the mountain, each order separately engaged in efforts to fortify their own walls. The Roman Catholics' walls withstood the battle, while their neighbors and "brothers in Christ" were massacred. They could not become unified even to save one another.

Historically, this land has always bred division and stubbornness, and, in turn, death and failure. It isn't any different now.

Bomb shelters: I walked through the Jabalia refugee camp of the Gaza Strip and listened as a man explained he would no longer be able to pay for electricity. I visited a kibbutz off the Sea of Galilee, where "Bill" showed us the bomb shelters of years past that have been transformed into computer centers and band rehearsal areas. Now the threat of chemical warfare renders them useless. During that visit, more than 10 Israeli military helicopters flew overhead, ever-present reminders of precarious "peace."

Students at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank—a politically active school and microcosm of the broader Palestinian mind-set—told me of their hopes, rage, frustration and desperate need for power. They are quick to articulate emotionally their position, quick to laugh, quick to ponder, quick to search for the truth and quick to feel the pain.

An American Jew, an Israeli lawyer working for Palestinian human rights, shared with me how her family despises and condemns her work

I looked at their eyes and their smiles, and I thought of my younger sisters at home. I wanted to cry, to scream at the politicians. I hate subjugation.

Gordon Houser

'Why do you hate us?': *A Palestinian shopkeeper in East Jerusalem*

Can I fully have peace if my neighbor doesn't?

because it is for the "enemy." Her charged words reflected the pain that the government inflicts on Palestinians, but her eyes reflected a more personal pain.

And my eyes reflected pain as the paradoxes became more explicit. I saw Jerusalem, the city of gold, from the Mount of Olives, looking peaceful in its splendor. I saw the beautiful wooded hill known as Har Homa, whose trees have since been ripped to the ground. I walked through a refugee camp and the streets of Hebron, and I looked across the fences on the Lebanese and Syrian borders of Israel. I saw men with automatic rifles strapped to their backs escort a group of schoolchildren around town. I saw the omnipresent military personnel—men and women, younger than I. I saw guns everywhere, so many guns.

And I saw the people, the children: Palestinians, Israelis, Armenians, Jews, Druzes, Muslims, Christians.

Suicide: A Palestinian student at the El Azhar University in the Gaza Strip asked, "Why do you (Americans) hate us?" An Israeli youth in Jerusalem admitted grimly, "There are three options for young Israelis: get high, get religious or commit suicide."

I looked at their meekness, their powerlessness toward the hatred that engulfs them. I looked at their eyes and their smiles, and I thought of my younger sisters at home. I wanted to cry, to scream at the politicians. I hate subjugation. I wanted to run away from the pain and the faces. And I wanted my mom. I needed peace to wash over my anger and calm my torn spirit.

Can I fully have peace if my neighbor doesn't?

I am neither pro-Israeli nor pro-Palestinian. I am pro-people. We are all humans, all need shelter and food, all deserve basic necessities. We know this. Is it too simple, too idealistic, too unrealistic?

Sydney Stigge, Newton, Kan., is a junior at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., where she studies Bible and religion and English. She spent 3 1/2 months (January to April) studying in Cairo, Egypt, and 2 1/2 weeks in Israel/Palestine.

Segregated worship: *A monk outside the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*

Gordon Houser

Letters

A HAIKU FROM INDIA

Flowers out bloom grime.
Street vendors display. Folks buy.
Joy in Calcutta.

Elda Bachman lives in North Newton, Kan.

UNTOLD STORIES

Many thanks for the two first-person articles on Mennonites who became Roman Catholics (May 27 issue). Both articles helped me reflect on my Mennonite identity and Christian commitment in a new and refreshing way. We need to hear more stories like theirs, because I am sure that each of us is in some sense a hyphenated Mennonite. (For instance, what church would you be drawn to if a Mennonite church were not an option?)

Speaking of untold stories, I have often wondered whether our General Conference has done all its homework with regard to African-American Mennonites? Gulfport (Miss.) and Woodlawn (Chicago) were household names for most of us in the '50s and '60s. They provided us with windows of opportunity for service and outreach with African-American brothers and sisters. Neither place exists for us in the same way. The resulting loss has impoverished our experience of working together across the racial divide.

Who will reflect on this untold story? I was reminded of this recently, while reading a review of Sue Miller's novel *The Distinguished Guest* in *The Christian Century*. I enjoyed reading the novel. It is about a church on Chicago's South Side and what happened to the white minister's family in the midst of the activism and rhetoric of black power during the turbulent 1960s. As I read, I recalled our Mennonite presence in the neighborhood of the Woodlawn Mennonite Church.

Keep up the good work of telling the diverse stories of Mennonite people in North America today. *Darrell Fast, Newton, Kan.*

Profile

Putting together the pieces

Patty Shelly has moved from pastoral ministry to academe to overseas service.

Melanie A. Zuercher

Patty Shelly has spent a lot of her life working her way into ministry. Born in Chicago while her father, Kenneth, was studying at the General Conference (GC) seminary, Patty spent her early childhood in small Mennonite churches in Trenton, Ohio, and Pulaski, Iowa.

"These were small communities and small churches where my dad did everything," says Patty. "I helped him fold the bulletins. I remember dusting church benches, because he cleaned the church on Saturdays—the janitor's salary supplemented what he made as a pastor."

Her family eventually moved to Newton, Kan., where Patty graduated from Newton High School and then went on to Bethel College in North Newton. In the middle, however, "I took a 2 1/2-year break, which included a year of voluntary service in the Denver area, working in a day-care center and relating to Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church." Her voluntary service unit, in fact, served as church janitors, an echo of Patty's growing up years.

This was the early '70s, and at the Arvada church, Patty found a kind of worship that, she says, "seemed new. It was more thematic—a theme developed through Scripture readings, hymns and responses. The sung and spoken word reinforced each other. There was a time of sharing as part of worship, with people's daily lives brought into the context of worship.

"In these services," she says, "the choir could sing from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, there could be a folk hymn and a four-part hymn, and they all fit together.

"Whatever gifts I have for worship planning were nurtured at Arvada Mennonite Church."

Eventually, Patty returned to Bethel, graduating in 1976 with a degree in Bible and religion. She wanted to go to seminary, but "I was not done with Denver." She moved back, got a job as half-time church secretary at Arvada Mennonite and started classes at Iliff School of Theology, a United Methodist seminary in Denver.

Licensed: Patty continued to work her way along. She did her pastoral field internship at Arvada. In 1983, she was licensed for pastoral ministry. By then, she was working as the half-time associate pastor at First Mennonite Church in Denver, a Mennonite Church (MC) congregation (Arvada was GC).

"My experience with church had always been GC," she says. "I wanted to be licensed in both Western District [GC] and Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference [MC]." So one Sunday in October 1983, the Arvada church folks traveled to Denver for a joint morning worship with First Mennonite and a licensing service for Patty.

In February 1985, she was "co-ordained" by the two churches. "I was the first woman ordained in the Rocky Mountain Conference. By that time, Western District had a number of women in ministry, and my ordination was nothing unusual.

"I was always aware that women in ministry was a disturbing issue for a certain segment of the church, and I heard some of the painful stories of women caught in the storm of controversy. I'm grateful that I felt support for my call to ministry in my church and family circles."

By this time, Patty was finishing her doctorate at Iliff and had accepted a full-time position teaching Bible and religion at Bethel. "I felt my ordination was a part of my understanding of my vocation—a ministry of teaching in the Mennonite church," she says. "And it paved the way for involvement in campus ministry."

By 1986, economic downsizing meant Patty was asked to cut back her teaching load at Bethel and devote part time to campus ministry, with primary responsibility for chapel.

At this point in Bethel's history, convocation was required, but chapel was optional, and it was hard, she says, to get people to attend chapel. "After two lecture/monologue events a week, you couldn't have chapel be like that."

So, building on her experience at Arvada, Patty planned thematic chapel services in which the parts—music, speaking, Scripture reading—were integrated. "This was natural to me but new to a lot of people," she says.

She made sure there was a high degree of participation. "It wasn't unusual to have eight, 10, 12 different people—faculty, staff and students—taking part in a chapel service, reading, sharing personal reflections, leading or performing music," she says. "At the end of the year, we'd make a thank-you poster for everyone who'd participated in chapel at least once and we'd have as many as 120 names."

She also made a point of trying to integrate the life of the campus into worship life. "Colleges are about teaching students to think, but Christian colleges are also about teaching them to worship and pray. It's a unique challenge to fit their [new] intellectual life into the faith they've grown up with. Students at Mennonite colleges are hungry to hear their intellectual mentors talk about their faith. They don't expect answers, they just want to know how faculty put together their faith with the questions they're helping raise in students' minds.

"It was important that chapel be a place you could come to when you're struggling. You didn't have to have all the answers to sing. Students should be able to come to chapel both to affirm their faith and to sing through their questions."

> ***"Students should be able to come to chapel both to affirm their faith and to sing through their questions."***

Chapel attendance climbed steadily during the 10 years Patty was planning the services.

In 1981, between finishing her master's degree and starting work on her doctorate, Patty went to Jerusalem for the first time, thanks to partial funding from an Iliff scholarship. "Otherwise I wouldn't have gone—it's astounding how close I came not to," she says.

She began leading tours of Jerusalem and the Holy Land for Bethel College in 1986. In 1988, she started collaborating with the GC ministerial leadership office on tours for pastors and seminary students, which have run every other year since then.

When Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) approached her with the offer of a four-year position as country representative in Jerusalem and West Bank, "there were a lot of reasons to take them seriously," she says.

Service: "Bethel College talks about its commitment to service, and we are committed. Students need to see faculty living out their commitment to service in different ways. One of the reasons I accepted this overseas assignment was to communicate that intellectual pursuits do not replace the call to service."

Patty took a four-year leave of absence from Bethel starting in 1996. Although she continues to lead some study tours, "it's different," she says. "Before, I moved in a circle that had primarily to do with 'tourists' and academics. Now I'm in a world having to do with NGOs [non-governmental organizations] and social services."

Signs of hope: *Patty Shelly (right) with Palestinian women in the West Bank*

And living among the daily conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians has been a new experience as well. "The situation continues to be grim," she says. "What signs of hope there are don't lie within the political realm at this point. I find more encouragement from the development projects MCC is involved in—people working to improve their lives or small organizations trying to contribute to their society."

This she continues to do, following a path of work and ministry.

Melanie A. Zuercher is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

Speaking out

Seeing Christ in the slum

We need to foster a sense of solidarity with people.

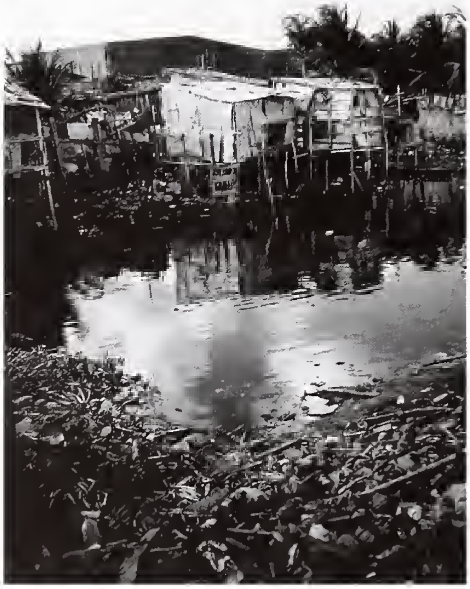
Will Braun

Having missed my bus out of the Paraguayan capital of Asuncion, I had an afternoon free. I walked toward downtown and came to a large riverside slum.

I felt out of place as I descended the precarious stairway from the asphalt to the mud path. I found myself in a mind-boggling maze of narrow dirt paths, rickety foot bridges, steep-sloped garbage-strewn gullies, meandering stairways and haphazardly arranged dwellings. Slowly and deliberately I walked farther into that overwhelming setting.

Many will never know a home other than this slum. The struggle here is not so much to live as to survive. There is little chance for life to blossom, only the odd courageous shoot emerging from a crack in the hardened reality. I was touched by the children's colorful paintings on a public wall.

I was not there to gawk but to share in that reality however I could. I thought of the people there as my sisters and brothers. I thought of the interrelatedness of all people. I saw how Christ, who experienced much injustice and gravitated to the margins of society, is revealed in these people and their circumstances.


Will Braun

On the margins: *A Latin American favela*

As I walked, my heart felt heavy from having glimpsed the raw reality of life: the reality in which one sees Christ, naked and bleeding, shedding the blood that unites us all in his redemptive life. There is, I believe, that of the divine in each of us, and I had a sense of Christ suffering with those people and in them.

I could just as easily have been born in one of those tiny shacks instead of in southern Manitoba. I am just like the people here, separated only by a fluke of fate, happenstance of history or divine decision, if one dares to suggest God would assign some to affluence and others to misery.

I stopped at a hut to buy something to drink. I thought of inconspicuously leaving some extra money for these people, but that did not seem like the thing to do. As I left that hut I recognized the need to throw money at the situation as a temptation:

- to yield to the need to fix, solve, see immediate, tangible results;
- to appease my conscience by dispensing our society's generic solution;
- to participate in the false myth that the Third World depends on our gifts of money;
- to make myself feel righteous as the helper rather than standing in humble, patient solidarity.

I do not suggest that we never give material aid, but at that moment I needed to see these people as dignified sisters and brothers, to join in the unspoken prayers arising from the situation, not become preoccupied with my solutions. The problem we call poverty is too often seem primarily in material terms. All the manifest problems stem from dilemmas of spirit, heart and mind-set; yet our efforts to "help" focus primarily on the material. By viewing less advantaged people primarily as potential objects of my material aid, I have too often robbed myself of a wonderful sense of participation in a global family rich with divinely conceived diversity. Giving can short-circuit the life-giving process of nurturing a sense of interconnectedness. Knowing my weakness, if I had left extra money at that hut I would have walked away righteously thinking about my contribution and its effects.

The need to fix, solve and see results must not precede or supersede the desire to foster a sense of solidarity with people. More important than sharing our wealth is sharing their poverty—seeking to enter their reality, identify with their dreams, experience Christ with them, even if only from a physical distance. The most valuable efforts to support disadvantaged people will arise out of a sense of interconnectedness. In addition to going overseas, pictures, stories, relationships with immigrants and entrance into the margins of our own societies are ways of developing meaningful connectedness. When we see pictures of marginalized people we must suspend thoughts of what could be done to solve the problem and look into their eyes, seeing them as sisters and brothers and sharing in their hurt. To go through the "rough" part of town with open eyes and heart is of value in itself. Material aid, without nurturing an attitudinal and spiritual coming together of people, misses the essence of the problem. Freed from a pestilent sense of obligation to give more money, we can focus on developing the fulfilling sense of connectedness that begins the true process of bringing about the kingdom.

The challenge is one of overcoming a sense of separation between people—expanding and enriching individual "worlds," initially by including the marginalized in our spirit and mind-set. Freedom from primarily materialistic ways of viewing our relation to Third-World people is crucial. We must focus on seeking Christ on the margins—the sorts of places where he was found centuries ago.

In that Asuncion slum I felt meaningful kinship with those people, and in that I saw Christ—naked and bleeding, shedding the blood that offers hope of the togetherness in which we experience more of God.

Will Braun is on assignment with Mennonite Central Committee, working with First Nations people in Port Hardy, B.C.

"Speaking out" and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite*.

Learning to pray

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Do women pray differently from men?

In general, yes, and here is how they do.

Marlene Kropf

Marlene Kropf was recently appointed assistant professor in spiritual formation and worship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

In our culture, women tend to be tuned in to relationships; men tend to be more achievement-oriented. Women look for ways to cooperate with others; men gravitate toward hierarchical organizational patterns. Though such generalizations are not true of all women and men, evidence points toward different patterns in the ways women and men typically function as members of groups and in their personal relationships with family and friends.

These cultural patterns raise the question of whether women and men also pray in different ways. Since prayer is fundamentally a matter of relationship (communion with God), might these different communication styles also affect the way women and men relate to God? Does the fact that we are embodied as female and male alter our spiritual practices?

Do women pray more than men? Though I know of no research that specifically addresses this question, anecdotal evidence suggests that women more frequently take advantage of opportunities to gather to pray in groups. Women's Bible study groups, Sunday school classes and fellowship groups nearly always include ample time for prayer. Women freely seek out spiritual friendships—an intimate relationship with another person that includes accountability and a commitment to pray for the other. Women have typically outnumbered men at spiritual renewal or prayer retreats. And in every course on prayer I have taught, more women enrolled than men.

Whenever I have had opportunity to drop in on daily prayer services in churches that hold regular morning and evening prayer services, I have been impressed by the presence of women—often elderly women. It is not unusual for pastors to refer to older women as "prayer warriors" in their congregations.

Mothers and grandmothers have often been the teachers of prayer in family settings. Though this role in the past seemed to grow naturally out of women's greater availability for child care, it also seems to be a role women readily accept. A family spirituality course I taught last fall for the first time at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary attracted 11 women (not all of whom were mothers) and one brave man (a new father).

Though one cannot assume that public participation in prayer groups is an adequate barometer for quantity of prayer, such engagement does suggest tentative conclusions.

Do women pray differently from men? Many women have welcomed explorations of new images for God in prayer. Though men may not as often find masculine language for God a barrier in prayer, women often feel something is missing in their God-experience if prayers are addressed only to a male deity. Women are usually comfortable with relational language for God—speaking of God, for example, as Friend, Healer or Teacher. They do not shrink from expressing their love for God or their joy in God's presence. They are also comfortable with symbolic language for God—e.g., praying to God as Fire, Light, Bread or Living Water.

It is not difficult for women to understand that prayer is also more a matter of listening than it is talking. Socialized to be receptive and to be good listeners, the women I have encountered generally do not find it difficult to be quiet in God's presence. Men, on the other hand, tend to struggle with quiet modes of prayer. With their achievement orientation, they may even want to take charge of prayer.

Women are more easily attracted to modes of prayer that involve the body than men are. Though some men welcome praying with their bodies, many feel an initial resistance to dance or other forms of movement that connect them with others when they pray. Because such prayer calls for engagement of the senses and investment of the heart, it can be troubling for people who prefer to live in their mind.

How should the church respond to differences in the ways women and men pray? Though women and men are probably more alike than different when it comes to prayer, the church would do well to offer a variety of modes for prayer so that all people find ample opportunities to nourish their life with God. Besides gender differences, many other factors, such as race, ethnic and cultural identity, economic status and geographic region, also influence people's styles of prayer. Such diversity will enrich the prayers of God's people if the church embraces the variety of perspectives and personalities God has created.

My Lord and God,
the words of Your Spirit are laden with delights.
As often as I hear them, my soul seems to absorb them
and they enter the heart of my body like the most delicious food,
bringing unbounded joy and unspeakable comfort.
After hearing Your words, I remain both satisfied and hungry—
satisfied, for I desire nothing else;
but hungry, for I crave more of Your words.

St. Bridget of Sweden (1302-1373) in* Soul Weavings: A Gathering of Women's Prayers, *edited by Lyn Klug (Augsburg, 1996)

Inside the news

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Visions collide at MCC U.S. / p. 17

B.C. conference accepts publication, Confession / p. 18

Entrepreneurs discover business 'assets' / p. 19

Correction: In our May 27 issue (page 19) we reported that 50 members of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, attended a 3 1/2-day retreat at the Ohio Reformatory for Women. The church members did assist by providing cookies, prayers, notes and more, but only one member, Pam Nath, actually attended the retreat.

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Mennonite Central Committee canned beef—199,503 pounds (90,683 kgs.) of it—arrived safely in Nampo, North Korea, on May 18. North Korea's rationing system, allotting just a daily half-bowl of rice per person, is on the verge of collapse. Government rations were expected to run out by June 20, and the rationing system had already stopped working in half of the country's 10 distribution areas. The United Nations estimates some 4.7 million North Koreans—one-fifth of the population—risk starvation this summer without massive food aid. The MCC meat will help feed some 114,500 hungry people for 15 days in two provinces. The food shortages are due to disastrous floods in 1995 and 1996, and years of poor crop yields. The crisis is expected to last at least through October, when the new harvest will be ready. In addition to the canned beef, MCC provided $150,000 U.S. ($200,000 Cdn.) to purchase corn and rice in Vietnam. These grains were sent to North Korea in April.

News

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Volunteers hold first-ever binational retreat

Knob Noster, Mo. (GCMC/MBM)—The newly-integrated Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) program experienced the physical reality of merger when nearly 130 volunteers and MVS staff gathered in western Missouri May 26-30 for the first-ever binational retreat.

MVS is a joint venture of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) of the Mennonite Church (MC).

The MVSers, who traveled from all over North America to the retreat, spent their time singing, playing games and thinking. The theme for the five-day retreat, "Coming Together," focused on the integration of the GC and MC volunteer programs.

Kathy Goering Reid, pastor at Austin (Texas) Mennonite Church, and Nelia Kimbrough, an ordained Methodist minister and a member of the Patchwork Community in Evansville, Ind., served as retreat resource people.

"There are a good many of us who think that integration is going to be a simple matter of saying the two denominations are now one," Goering Reid said. "It's not that easy. We have many points of understanding and history that are integrated already, but we still need to work intentionally at becoming one … on the level of voluntary service and the denominations as a whole."

Using artistic expression and small group Bible study, the two women focused on ways all are part of one human community, regardless of ethnic, geographic or denominational origin.

Kimbrough, an artist, had invited each MVS unit to look around their neighborhood for broken glass to bring with them to the retreat. She spoke to the group about the brokenness of volunteers themselves and the people with whom they work.

The unit groups then poured their broken glass onto the floor of the meeting area in the shape of a cross to symbolize the healing offered by the sacrifice of Jesus.

During a time of "facts and frolics," each unit had the chance to present to the entire group a thumbnail sketch of life in their unit. While many of the presentations were humorous, focusing on mishaps in the unit house or work assignments, it became clear that all the volunteers are engaged in difficult and often stressful work.

For both staff and volunteers, the first binational retreat was an experiment. It was the first time all the MVSers in North America were in one place, along with staff workers from both the Newton, Kan., and Elkhart, Ind., offices.

Christy Risser

Beauty from brokenness: *Nelia Kimbrough makes art with broken glass at the first binational retreat of Mennonite Voluntary Service, in Knob Noster, Mo.*

Based on volunteers' evaluations, it seemed the larger format succeeded.

"It is great to get together with all the MVSers and realize how big a community [we] are," one volunteer said.

"[It helped] to connect again with the broad vision of MVS," said another. *Christy Risser*

Two conferences talk merger, vision

Lakewood, Colo. (GCMC)—When Western District Conference (WDC) of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference (RMMC) of the Mennonite Church met here jointly June 13-15 to talk about "A Vision for the Third Millenium," integration was obviously a vital part of that vision.

Delegates and families from both conferences shared meals, worship sessions and workshops during the weekend event, held on the campus of Colorado Christian University. The delegates met in separate sessions on Saturday morning and as one group on Saturday afternoon, with integration issues as the agenda.

The two conferences last met together in the mid-'80s. WDC and South Central Conference of the Mennonite Church met at the same time and place, near Dallas, Texas, last year. The three conferences' discussions on the possibility of future integration coalesced into an Integration Transition Committee that met for the first time immediately following the WDC/RMMC sessions this year.

During the Saturday afternoon joint meeting, delegates heard from conference leaders.

Several mentioned geography as a major challenge to integrating the three conferences, which include congregations from Mexico (just south of the border) and south Texas to Nebraska and northern Missouri, west into Colorado and east into Arkansas.

The conference moderators talked briefly about hopes and fears for conference integration. "Joining resources in church planting is a benefit to us," said outgoing WDC moderator Wynn Goering, Goessel, Kan. "There's also a fear in the Western District that our cherished church polity will be sacrificed in some kind of 'political' trade."

Paul Johnson, Aurora, Colo., moderator of RMMC, said the fear in RMMC is "of losing our 'family' feel. Our congregations are independent and local and we worry about losing that in a big regional entity."

WDC business included giving the nod to budget proposals that will be finalized in the fall and accepting a slate of candidates for conference offices. There was one nomination from the floor—Mark Sawin, Austin, Texas, to the historical committee.

The peace and social concerns committee brought to the floor a resolution dealing with legal noncitizens and benefits that were recently taken away by welfare reform legislation. The resolution urged congregations and individuals to communicate to their congressional representatives the desire to see these benefits restored. The resolution passed.

WDC also recognized 15 new pastors and welcomed Iglesia Menonita Luz del Evangelio (Light of the Gospel Mennonite Church), Dallas, into membership in the district.

Of the workshops, one of the most heavily attended was on homosexuality. Goering reported to the gathered delegates that when a proposed resolution on homosexuality from New Hopedale Mennonite Church, Meno, Okla., and a request for workshop time and space from the Newton (Kan.) Area Study Group on Homosexuality came into the WDC office at almost the same time, conference staff decided to turn it into an opportunity to begin the dialogue in the Western District. The resoution came before delegates but received no vote.

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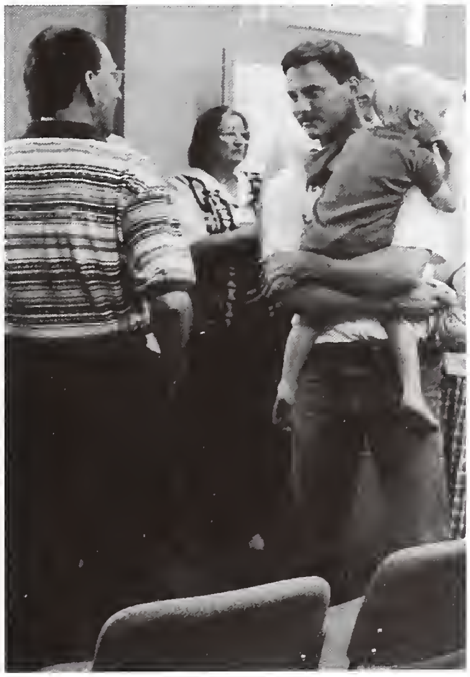

Melanie Zuercher

Starting the dialogue: *Kevin Goertzen (holding son Stephan), pastor at Goessel (Kan.) Mennonite Church, talks with Larry Brashear, pastor at New Hopedale Mennonite Church, Meno, Okla., following a workshop on homosexuality at which Brashear was a presenter.*

The 55th annual conference of Saskatchewan Women in Mission was held April 12 at Hague Mennonite Church. The theme was "Seeking God's Kingdom." Saskatchewan Women in Mission has 710 members in 46 groups. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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Bluffton (Ohio) College graduated its largest class ever (220 seniors) May 24. Graduates also included the first 18 students to receive a master of arts in education degree. The scheduled commencement speaker, Samuel Proctor, died suddenly right before the graduation. Donald Pannabecker, retiring Bluffton vice president and dean of academic affairs, took Proctor's place as speaker.

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Students at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., raised over $50,000 Cdn. at an "Envirathon/Servathon" day May 2. More than 130 students planted bushes and prepared spawning beds for bass at a lake rehabilitation project. Others planted trees and cleaned roadsides and trails. The funds raised will purchase computer equipment, subsidize the international exchange programs and help plant a peace garden at the school. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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The sixth annual Biblical Bike Ride for Nazareth Hospital will take place Oct. 31 to Nov. 9. The ride will range from the Mediterranean Sea to the Sea of Galilee and will benefit the medical mission work of the Nazareth Hospital. Each U.S. rider needs to raise $3,800 in sponsorships from individuals, business and churches. The money covers transportation costs for the rider, plus a significant donation to the hospital. For information on the ride contact Barbara Willems Hoover at Nazareth Project International, (717) 859-1389.

The Iowa Mennonite Central Committee relief sale, held May 23-24, grossed $158,000 for the organization. A record-breaking 6,500 attended. The sale raised $15,000 more than last year's. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Gladys Siebert, missionary in Taiwan for more than 20 years, was honored posthumously with the 1997 Medical Contribution Award on April 12 at Taipei City Hall. Siebert served as a nurse-anesthetist and chaplain at Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hualien from 1964 until her death in 1989.

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A Mediation Skills Training Institute will be held Aug. 11-15 in Lombard, Ill. The institute, sponsored by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, is designed to help church leaders (and leaders in business and community) get the skills to deal with group conflict. For information contact LMPC, 528 E. Madison, Lombard, IL 60148-0986; (630) 627-5310; fax (630) 627-9893; e-mail 103627.3505@compuserve.com.

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The World Evangelical Fellowship held its 10th General Assembly in Abbotsford, B.C., May 8-15. WEF represents 150 million Christians in 113 countries. Five hundred forty delegates and 100 guests from 87 countries attended the event, although celebration events attracted thousands of local attenders. The World Evangelical Fellowship is one of three worldwide evangelical bodies, and the most formally organized. WEF is an umbrella organization for evangelical organizations such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the National Association of Evangelicals in the United States. (James Coggins, *Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

In the workshop, Larry Brashear, New Hopedale pastor, expressed the concern of his congregation over an article in *Mennonite Weekly Review* that reported on efforts by the Supportive Congregations Network to expand its membership base. SCN is a network of MC, GC and Church of the Brethren congregations that welcome gay, lesbian and bisexual people as members and full participants.

"SCN is promoting a viewpoint about which we feel different," said Brashear, and he went on to outline the basis in Bible and church tradition for his congregation's stance.

Following Brashear's presentation, Earl Loganbill of the Newton group gave the other side of the debate.

Participants agreed that the open discussion that followed was "civil and mature." Consensus seemed to be that no one was ready to advocate "kicking people out" of congregations and that dialogue should continue.

"I'm a sinner," said Gay Kauffman, Beatrice, Neb. "Jesus has forgiven me but I'm still a sinner. If we start trying to remove from our congregations everyone who's a 'sinner,' we won't have any congregations left."

"We need to accept the possibility that we'll never find common ground but have faith that we'll find higher ground," said another participant.

The featured speaker for the conference sessions was Tom Sine, Seattle, who urged Mennonites to adopt "whole life discipleship, in which God wants to transform every part of our lives.

"You guys invented lifestyle change and now you don't talk about it, so I'm going to give it back to you," said Sine. "The 'good life' needs to be defined biblically instead of culturally. It has less to do with work and suburban living and more to do with the God who will return and make all things new."
Melanie A. Zuercher

Consultation considers power and authority

Kitchener, Ont. (Meetinghouse)—How does our Mennonite theology shape our organizations and institutions? How do we use power in our businesses and professions?

These questions faced 60 businesspeople, administrators and professionals at a May 24 consultation here on "Power and Authority in the Mennonite Church." Eight presentations touched on issues of power in business, academic leadership and nonprofit organizations.

The event was coordinated by Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, Elmira, Ont., and grew out of her doctoral studies on religion, ideology and art. Discussions with people such as J. Lawrence Burkholder, former president of Goshen (Ind.) College, about church institutions convinced her more conversation is needed. Several Mennonite organizations and schools supported the event.

The first session focused on business. Arthur Block, Vancouver, who heads companies ranging from real estate to agribusiness and is deeply involved in Mennonite Brethren institutions, presented a diagram that showed the many forces (powers) to which a business leader is subject, from competition to employee needs. Business leaders are called to balance all these powers, and then to lead—creatively, productively and rightly, Block said.

"What are we trying to correct?"

John Toews

Ron Schlegel, Kitchener, a professor before he entered business full-time, noted a disturbing contrast: His church affirmed his ability to work with "academic assets" but not with capital.

"The perception of businesspeople as wealthy becomes a barrier," he said in his exploration of why the church underutilizes the leadership skills of businesspeople. On the other hand, those in business are often given undue awe. Schlegel echoed Block's conviction that the ability to work with money is also a "calling."

The second session looked at power and authority in academic leadership. Presenters were Burkholder and William Klassen, Toronto, New Testament scholar and former administrator.

Burkholder said that the neglect of power and the failure to allocate power along legal lines is a critical failure of church institutions.

The question for an institution is, Who is authorized to develop a vision which defines what a particular institution stands for? The person with the power to define the mission of that institution ultimately determines its success and continuance.

Klassen noted the need to follow the model of Jesus, citing examples of people in academic circles who practice this discipleship. He also suggested that to have authority and power is exhilarating, and to be able to make decisions that make a difference is very satisfying.

In the discussion following, it was noted that while businesspeople bemoan the fact that they feel alienated from the church, academics are no longer in the churches.

The third topic of the consultation was power and authority in nonprofit organizations. Herta Janzen, executive director of Donwood Manor, Winnipeg, quoted Matthew 28:19-20 to illustrate that power and authority are given by God to achieve results. But with that authority also come responsibility and accountability.

Discussion following this section elicited comments such as, "We need to know when we are leaders and when we are followers," with suggestions on how to move between those roles. One person noted that it would be worthwhile for pastors and church people to take sabbaticals in the workplace and for businesspeople to take sabbaticals in church work.

At day's end, many questions remained unanswered.

"We didn't begin with a clear understanding of the problem," said John Toews of Conrad Grebel College, one of the planners. "What are we trying to correct?" He also expressed frustration that the discussion shifted so quickly away from power.

About 22 participants met for Sunday morning breakfast at a local restaurant to continue the conversation. Evaluations indicated that "we've only started and should get together again next year," said Nafziger-Leis.

Margaret Loewen Reimer, associate editor of Mennonite Reporter, *and Susan Brandt, managing editor of* Mennonite Brethren Herald, *for Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group*

Laying the groundwork

North Newton, Kan. (MCC)—Bru-Den Construction workers begin installation of sewer utilities on the future site of Mennonite Central Committee's new regional facility here.

Contributions and commitments to the facility fund drive, called "Building to Share," have reached $225,000 U.S. When $400,000 has been raised, construction will start on the volunteer activity center, material resources warehouse and MCC Central States regional offices.

Total capital budget for the project is $750,000. The Central States board has committed itself to raising $400,000. Another $250,000 will come from MCC and $50,000 from MCC U.S., with $50,000 anticipated from the sale of current Central States facilities. A four-acre gift of land in North Newton, valued at $50,000, will become the new facility site.

Ron Braun

Ground breaking has not been set; the earliest date would be late summer or early fall.

The Central States region covers 16 states from Montana to Minnesota and from New Mexico to Mississippi. The region includes some 500 Mennonite, Amish and Brethren in Christ churches.

Mother Teresa has asked the Bongo Java coffeehouse in Nashville, Tenn., to stop profiting from selling goods related to a cinnamon bun claimed to bear her likeness (see Feb. 11 issue). The bun has been displayed at the coffeehouse since last October. Coffeehouse owner Bob Bernstein has been selling T-shirts, mugs and prayer cards with the bun's image on them. At first Bernstein said, "I don't think we're doing anything in bad taste. If she saw the fun and good spirit in which we're doing things, I think she'd appreciate it." Upon further communication with Mother Teresa's U.S. attorney, Bernstein is reconsidering. He says, "I've made so little money on this that there's no point antagonizing anybody." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Faculty of Bluffton (Ohio) and Goshen (Ind.) colleges met at Bluffton May 28-29 for "Communities of Memory: A Bluffton College-Goshen College Symposium on Teaching Peace." It was the first joint meeting of the two colleges. Participants discussed how integration of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference might affect the two colleges. Faculty gave examples of planned joint efforts, such as exploring models for MBA programs. They challenged the college presidents to make funds available for interchange between Mennonite colleges. George Lehman, associate professor of business at Bluffton, said, "We need to explore what we can do together to increase the likelihood that Mennonite students will go to Mennonite colleges, rather than fighting each other for a shrinking pool of Mennonite students."

Volunteers are invited to join Christian Peacemaker Teams Rebuilders July 20-26 in Orangeburg, S.C., where the Butler Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church building was destroyed by hate groups. Volunteers will help with brick-laying and drywall installation. There is some concern that the rebuilding may be met with violence because of the many roadblocks encountered in the process. For information contact Cliff Kindy at (219) 982-2971, or the CPT office at (312) 455-1199.

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New welfare legislation in Pennsylvania has prompted ASSETS Lancaster, a Mennonite Economic Development Associates organization in Lancaster, Pa., to promote day-care services training. Welfare recipients now must look for work or face the loss of benefits; for many, child care is a barrier to employment. The Home-Based Day Care Initiative will provide training to people wishing to start their own day-care centers. "It can empower a parent to leave home and seek work," says ASSETS Lancaster board member Alice Bland, "or empower another to remain at home in her own operation." (*Mennonite Economic Development Associates*)

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Tim Wiens, a physician from Newton, Kan., and member of New Creation Fellowship, a Mennonite congregation there, testified at an April 9 U.S. House of Representatives hearing on the need to expand children's health insurance. Wiens, director of a local clinic serving low-income people, testified before the House Democratic Caucus that most of his patients at the clinic "would not otherwise seek medical care if it were not for our clinic." Wiens continued, "What we can provide is still really only a piecemeal effort. We need more efforts from all sectors, but the most comprehensive approach would be federal help." (*Mennonite Central Committee News Service*)

New Bible study material under construction

Divide, Colo. (GCMC)—As generations change so does church curriculum—that's the belief of two peace church denominations now working on new adult Bible study material.

During a four-day writers' workshop May 28-June 1 at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp here, a team of writers got together to begin working on the curriculum, which is so new it doesn't yet have a name. The publishing divisions of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Faith & Life Press, and of the Church of the Brethren (COB), Brethren Press, will produce the four-year series, with the Mennonite Church as a cooperative user.

Editors Susan E. Janzen (GC) and Julie Garber (COB) don't see this new material as a replacement for the current adult curriculum, the International Lessons (also known as the Uniform Series), still one of their most popular items.

The International Lessons "generally serve those ... over 50 years of age in our congregations," say the editors in an introduction to the manual intended to aid the writers of the new curriculum.

"This new curriculum hopes to reach that other, somewhat younger audience that does not currently choose to use the International Lessons. We believe that the style, look and methods will set this curriculum beside the International Lessons as a viable alternative."

"It's not a competition for the Uniform Series, it's a complement," says Ken Hawkley, GC staff person for young adult ministries, who, along with Janzen and Garber, met with the writing team.

"It's a way to make [Bible study] interactive," he says.

The new curriculum is a spin-off of Generation Why, a youth Sunday school curriculum developed by the same publishers that has won favor with some Baptist and Presbyterian groups as well as Mennonite and COB.

"I think they find it attractive because of its grittiness. When you put it alongside others, it's brave," says Garber, who helped conceive the Generation Why material, subtitled "Finding answers to the world's tough questions."

The new adult Bible study curriculum, like its youth counterpart, is centered around an active learning method.

"It's very important to keep in mind that people learn differently. Therefore you should teach differently," Hawkley told the writing team.

"The call for Bible study today is a call to active learning, where biblical concepts are connected to contemporary life, and in many cases, acted upon," the writers' manual says.

Aiden Schlichting Enns

No name: *A group of writers met in Colorado recently to begin work on a new adult Sunday school curriculum that is as yet untitled. From left, Ken Hawkley, Craig Morton, Virginia Wiles, Aiden Schlichting Enns, Lani Wright, Julie Garber (top) and Susan Janzen.*

Instead of assuming a teacher-student method of instruction, the new curriculum will employ a participant-led approach—that is, it will be written for participants with no special guide for teachers. The leader serves as group facilitator, not as a teacher.

"These are sessions in which learning happens, rather than sessions in which teaching happens," says Hawkley.

The first four studies are due to be completed by mid-March 1998. Lani Wright, Cottage Grove, Ore., who edits Generation Why, will write a study on prayer; Virginia Wiles, Allentown, Pa., New Testament scholar and professor at Muhlenberg College, on nativity; Craig Morton, most recently a pastor in Harleysville, Pa., on Exodus, and Aiden Schlichting Enns, Winnipeg, a provincial editor for *Mennonite Reporter*, on Abraham. *Aiden Schlichting Enns*

Visions collide at MCC U.S.

Lancaster, Pa. (MCC)—Two visions for the future of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. collided at its executive committee meeting June 13.

An executive committee that earlier had put forward plans to disperse much of its national office heard in June from staff largely committed to a strong national headquarters.

The recommendation to decentralize came out of an executive committee retreat in May. The proposal would have reduced national staff and program, moving most of MCC U.S.'s current work into its four regional offices. The size of the MCC U.S. board, which now has 28 members, also would have been reduced.

"We wanted to somehow move toward a shift of power [to] the local level," said executive committee member Tim Lind, Three Rivers, Mich. "We also wanted to continue to have a strong national structure."

By dispersing some of the national office's staff and workload, the executive committee hoped to bring program as close to constituency as possible.

The June 13 meeting was a chance for staff to respond to this proposal. Speaking for Community Ministries, which administers the MCC U.S. Service Program, Peace and Justice Ministries and the Washington Office, Janet Weber, assistant director of Community Ministries, read a list of 13 potentially harmful effects of decentralization.

Prophetic voice: A point that surfaced repeatedly was fear that MCC U.S. might lose its prophetic voice. "Prophetic voice requires distance from constituency pressures like fund raising," Weber said.

Specifically at risk, said Peace and Justice Ministries director Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, is the anti-racism work undertaken as part of "Broadening the Vision," an MCC U.S. initiative to be inclusive of its entire church constituency.

"'Broadening the Vision' is a fragile plant just beginning to take root," de Leon-Hartshorn said. "A move to regionalization will seriously jeopardize our commitment to it."

Community Ministries director James Logan echoed the concern about weakening the national office. "If I had been in [a regional office] and written the same [controversial] things I have, I'd have been gone a long time ago. You can't say those things in the same place you're trying to raise money. It's going to be watered down, it's going to be safe and it's not going to be prophetic."

Constituency Ministries, the part of MCC U.S. that, with the regional offices, works at fund raising and gathering material resources, was less pessimistic about the proposal.

"Constituency Ministries' work has been regionalized over the past five years," director Brenda Wagner told the executive committee. "So your recommendation felt to us like a continuation of what had begun a number of years prior."

Regions ready: The executive committee also heard from MCC regional offices, all of whom supported regionalization at some level.

West Coast MCC director Stephen Penner said his board was "favorable [to the proposal] but felt it was a little too aggressive and goes too far."

MCC East Coast director Lynn Roth said his board was "in support with caution." East Coast board chair Norman Shenk , Salunga, Pa., said, there is "some eagerness" for running more program at the regional level.

Ron Braun, director of MCC Central States, said his office was eager to take more programming initiative.

MCC Great Lakes co-director Bruce Glick said his region was not as eager to take on more responsibility. "We don't have a tradition of programming. We're not seeking it but we are open to it."

"If I had been in [a regional office] and written the same [controversial] things I have, I'd have been gone a long time ago."

James Logan

The meetings concluded with a closed session in which executive committee members and administrative staff continued brainstorming new models, but no conclusions were reached. As Glick reminded the group, "No matter how deep the differences appear to be, we are committed to the same things, just maybe not the same way of getting there." *Larry Penner*

The Defense Monitor reports that for fiscal year 1997 the Pentagon is spending $67.4 million per day to fight a nuclear war. (_Mennonite Weekly Review_)

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"Effective Pastoral Caregiving: Caring for Others, Caring for Yourself" is the 13th annual teleconference series for clergy, congregational health ministries and church personnel, sponsored by Philhaven, Mount Gretna, Pa. The four-part series begins Sept. 25 and ends March 26, 1998. Sites will be in south central Pennsylvania, Florida, Indiana, Ohio, Virginia, Manitoba and Ontario. For information on the series or setting up a satellite center, contact Community Education, Philhaven, (717) 240-2400.

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On June 10, people in more than 25 U.S. and foreign cities joined a worldwide witness opposing economic sanctions against Iraq. In Washington, police arrested six people, including two Christian Peacemaker Teams members, as they knelt in front of the White House. According to United Nations statistics, more than one million Iraqis (including 600,000 children) have died as a result of the U.S. bombing and the sanctions. The infrastructure is still in ruins, and crucial food and medicine are either not allowed in or there is not enough money to pay for them. The mortality rate for children under 5 has gone from 540 per month before the sanctions to 5,600 per month. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has claimed that the sanctions are "worth it" despite the fact that they cause the deaths of thousands of children and have clearly done nothing to affect Saddam Hussein. CPT is a member of the "Voices in the Wilderness" campaign, which called for the June 10 witness and sends teams of people bearing medical supplies to Iraq in open violation of the sanctions. (_Christian Peacemaker Teams_)

Promise Keepers hosted its first African-American leaders' summit in Denver in March, reports *Christianity Today*. With a vow to make racial reconciliation part of PK's ministry, the organization is hoping to recruit minorities to attend "A Solemn Assembly of Men," an Oct. 4 "prayer repentance" gathering in Washington. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Canadian Mennonite Bible College graduated 34 students April 27. The theme for the graduation weekend was "This Is the Way, Walk in It," based on Isaiah 30:21. Five CMBC faculty were recognized, including John Neufeld, Waldemar Janzen and Esther Wiebe, who have retired; Wendy Janzen, who will be youth pastor at Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, and Irma Fast-Dueck, who is on a two-year study leave.

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On April 13, Jimmy Carter taught a Bible study from Revelation 2 on the title "Called to Be Faithful" at the Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga.; Carolyn Yost taught a lesson by the same title at First Mennonite Church in Phoenix, and Gerhard Ens led an adult class using the same text at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. All were based on the outlines of the International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching, or the Uniform Series. This series is the closest thing to a common lectionary in Christian education. The series was organized at the National Sunday School Convention meeting in Indianapolis 125 years ago. Mennonites began using the International Bible Lesson outlines soon after they formed Sunday schools in the late 19th century.

B.C. conference accepts publication, Confession

Vancouver (*Mennonite Reporter*)—The resolution that created the most passionate discussion at the June 6-7 sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia was on the proposed Canada-wide periodical, to be named *Canadian Mennonite.*

In the end, however, delegates passed the periodical proposal. All five area conferences in Canada have now approved the proposal, which was also presented to the delegates at the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) annual sessions in Winnipeg, July 3-6.

The delegates were asked to respond to a three-part resolution: (1) to accept in principle the creation of this periodical, which would replace *Mennonite Reporter* and the CMC periodical *Nexus*, for distribution to all conference households; (2) to accept a governing structure consisting of a 12-member board, with one representative from each of five area conferences, four representatives from CMC and three from Mennonite Publishing Service; (3) to accept a financial plan which calls for the area conferences and CMC to provide per-member grants for the publication.

Some expressed concern over editorial policies and control. One delegate asked whether the new publication will adhere to the Confession of Faith. (Delegates had just endorsed the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.*) Ron Rempel, *Mennonite Reporter* editor who will also be editor of *Canadian Mennonite*, said the paper will be guided by the Confession.

The same delegate said there are some points of faith—for example, the Confession's views on sexuality or lifestyle choices—which should not be open for discussion, even in letters to the editor. The comment drew applause.

Others expressed concern about censorship and said it is important for church publications to address controversial issues, such as homosexuality, that face many congregations.

Several delegates said their congregations had decided to vote against the publication resolution. That raised the question about financial support: Would congregations who voted "no" withhold funding if the resolution was passed by a majority?

Waldo Neufeld, Abbotsford, chair of the Publication Steering Committee, indicated that if the resolution passed, all churches had to accept the decision of the majority and work together to support it.

Delegates called for a ballot vote on each part of the resolution. The first passed with a 71 percent majority, the second with 78 percent and the third with 64 percent, with an amendment calling for a review in two years.
Angelika Dawson

Vision quest

Vancouver (*Mennonite Reporter*) —In 1996, the discussion about what to do with the property here of the former Mountainview Mennonite Church created heated debate at the annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia.

The decision then was to hold back on selling the property. The building was rented to another church, and the Vancouver area Mennonite churches began discussing an urban ministry vision.

A year later, they are still holding, renting and discussing. At the June 6-7 conference sessions, delegates passed a resolution to have an extra meeting in fall to make a final decision about the property.

What seems to have surfaced in the past year is the realization that more is at issue than the Mountainview property. Urban Mennonite churches are struggling to define a vision for ministry and a strategy for survival in an urban setting.

In mid-May, more than two dozen people representing most of the lower-mainland churches met at First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver. What was supposed to be a meeting to finalize their urban vision became a setting for churches to share their history, their programs and their struggles.

The group decided to continue the discussion on urban vision at upcoming pastors' lunches.
Angelika Dawson

Entrepreneurs discover business 'assets'

Norristown, Pa. (MEDA)—To Paula Robinson, the downtown curb is a campus, and the young rappers gathered there are the student body.

This "Street Corner University" is where she sells hip-hop clothing with a wholesome message. Her rapper fashions—screen-printed T-shirts, sweatshirts and headbands—promote possibility thinking for young African-Americans.

"We want to build self-esteem and work with anti-drug and anti-crime themes," she says.

Robinson's young company got a boost from ASSETS—A Service for Self-Employment Training and Support. The microenterprise assistance program, founded by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), provides help to lower- and middle-income people who want to start or expand a business. The program originated in Lancaster, Pa., three years ago, and has now been replicated in Norristown.

When Robinson heard about the new Norristown program she already had a product and a market but needed business fundamentals. She enrolled in ASSETS Montco (for Montgomery County) and began attending class two nights a week. Guided by volunteer trainers, many from the Mennonite business community, she learned record-keeping, financing, pricing and marketing.

When she graduated 13 weeks later she had completed a business plan workbook, which will serve as a blueprint for her company. She had also been teamed with a mentor.

Not everyone comes to ASSETS with a business nearly under way. Some have only a vague idea that they'd like to start one.

"They may have the dream and aspiration but don't know how to get to first base," says Jim Williams, director of ASSETS Montco.

Rob Robinson (no relation to Paula) says he's wanted his own business "since I was a little kid of 8 stocking shelves at Delberta's grocery store." For some time he has dreamed of opening a Christian bookstore in a needy area of Norristown. ASSETS provided both guidance and encouragement.

"The course kept me from running into a lot of dead ends," he says. "It opened my eyes to things I hadn't thought about, things to watch out for."

A driving force behind replicating the program in Norristown was the Clayton Kratz Fellowship MEDA chapter in the Souderton, Pa., area. Chapter officials immediately recognized the pilot program as a unique alternative to welfare. It seemed well-suited to Norristown, which badly needed revitalization as companies vacated downtown for the malls.

The program is operated jointly by the CKF MEDA chapter and a broadly based coalition including Norristown Ministries, Inc., and the Norristown New Life Church, where director Williams is a member, and associate director Luke Beidler is part-time pastor.

ASSETS officials believe the program will make a dent in poverty and bring hope to downtown.

Rob Robinson sees business as a path to a better future for his children.

"I want to lead by demonstration," he says, "that my children can be employers and not only employees, the head and not the tail."

MEDA

Street Corner University: *Paula Robinson of Norristown, Pa., started her own business with help from Mennonite Economic Development Associates.*

Honda of America Manufacturing has awarded Bluffton (Ohio) College a $75,000 grant toward construction of a new academic center. Honda recently completed another $75,000 grant to Bluffton to fund the Honda Peace Sculpture Gallery for the Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center there.

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Mennonite World Conference has a new Strasbourg address: Conference Mennonite Mondiale, 8 rue du Fosse des Treize, 67000 Strasbourg, France. The Ontario address is the same: 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1; (519) 571-0060; fax (519) 571-1980; e-mail: 74737.1611@compuserve.com. (*Courier*)

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***With: the Magazine for Radical Christian Youth* received several awards from the Evangelical Press Association. These included an award of merit for a youth magazine; second place in critical review for "Idiots with Guns" by Greg Hatcher, and second place in fiction for "Blind Faith" by Greg Hatcher. *With* is published by the General Conference Mennonite Church.**

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The United States' largest corporations receive more government money than our social welfare program, reports the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. For example, in 1995 the Pentagon paid Lockheed Martin $850 million in "consolidation costs" and $100 million in bonuses to Lockheed and Martin Marietta's top executives for merging the two giant military contractors. From 1990 to 1994, General Motors received more than $110 million in federal technology subsidies as a stimulus to create jobs. In 1994, GM netted $4.7 billion in profits, yet in the four-year period cut their U.S. work force by 25 percent. (*Peace and Social Justice Center Newsletter*)

Record

COM—Commission on Overseas Mission
MBM—Mennonite Board of Missions
MCC—Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite World Conference has a new executive committee, composed of Mesach Krisetya (Indonesia), president; Bedru Hussein (Ethiopia), vice president; Reg Toews (Canada), treasurer, and Larry Miller (France), executive secretary. North America representatives are Justina Heese (Canada) and Alberto Quintela (United States). Milka Rindzinski, Montevideo, Uruguay, is the new general editor for MWC, responsible for MWC's publication, *Courier*, in English and Spanish.

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A letter handwritten by Martin Luther was found last July in an empty laundry detergent box. Christine Oppitz, curator of the archives at Herzongenburg, Austria, found the letter dated March 14, 1528, reported *Allianz Spiegel*. The letter was made public only after theologians in Wittenberg, Germany, had established its authenticity. It is now on view at the Austrian National Library. The letter is addressed to Lady Dorothea Jorger and deals with preacher Michael Stiefel's demands for, according to Luther, unheard of sums of money. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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"Get Ready for Harvest," a cell group seminar sponsored by the home ministries department of Eastern Mennonite Missions and several Lancaster-area churches who are working at cell development, will be held Oct. 3-4 in Millersville, Pa. Featured speaker is Billy Hornsby, director of cell group ministry for the Bethany World Prayer Center in Baker, La. This church of over 4,000 people made the transition to a cell-based model and now has more than 300 cell groups. For information contact Danielle Kreider at Eastern Mennonite Missions, (717) 898-2251, or 75020.2662@compuserve.com.

MINISTERS

Erlina Bowers is a Bluffton (Ohio) College summer Ministry Inquiry Program intern at Grace Church, Pandora, Ohio.

Grace and **Paul Brunner** will be interim pastors at Tabor Church, Newton, Kan., beginning in August.

Andrew Chan has resigned as pastor at Faith Church, Calgary.

Eric Deckert will be pastor at Turpin (Okla.) Church beginning in September.

James Dunn is interim pastor at Faith Church, Newton, Kan.

Dayvid Graybill is pastor at Houston Church.

Shoua Moua was commissioned as pastor at the Hmong Church in Arvada, Colo.

Kerry Saner is interim youth minister at First and Trinity churches in Hillsboro, Kan.

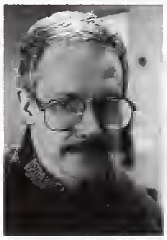
Dennis Schmidt has resigned as pastor at Alexanderwohl Church, Goessel, Kan. He will become pastor at Oak Grove Church, Smithville, Ohio, Sept. 1.

Ezekiel Wong is resigning as pastor at Calgary Chinese Church at the end of the summer.

WORKERS

Jan Jantzen, Emporia, Kan., is director of enrollment management at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Gretchen and **Keith Kingsley,** Fellowship of Hope Church, Elkhart, Ind., will be COM/MBM workers in the Chaco province of Argentina. They will relate to the United Evangelical Church, a conference of more than 140 indigenous congregations.


Longhurst

John Longhurst has ended as communications staff for MCC Canada. He will be coordinator of marketing and media relations for Mennonite Economic Development Associates beginning Aug. 1.

Ken Reddig, Winnipeg, is director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.

Newton Et Cetera Shop seeks manager to assume responsibilities Aug. 1. Full-time position salaried. Apply at **619 Main St., Newton, KS 67114; (316) 283-9461.**

Ten Thousand Villages, a handicraft marketing program of Mennonite Central Committee, is recruiting for **short-term volunteers** for the fall (Aug. 25 to Dec. 19) to help in the Akron, Pa., warehouse.

For more information on these opportunities, please call **Sherrie Ober at (717) 859-8117**; or e-mail **smo@mcc.org.**

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open for the 1997-98 school year: **mathematics instructor** (full-time).

Send resumes or inquiries to **Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Rd., Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Camp Men-O-Lan, the oldest Mennonite camp in North America, located in southeastern Pennsylvania, has begun a search for a **camp administrator.** The selected candidate should have a passion for camping and conference ministries and administrative experience, and be competent with budget preparation and financial management, fund development, personnel and promotion. Camping experience a plus. Salary and benefits package will be provided.

Candidates possessing these skills should submit resume, salary history and summary of career goals to **Men-O-Lan Board of Directors, 1415 Doerr Rd., Quakertown, PA 18951-2042.**

The Other Side, the Christian magazine of peace, justice and spirituality, seeks a **director of operations** to coordinate overall management, long-range planning, personnel and board development. Team-building skills; two to four years administrative experience required. We offer excellent benefits and work on a common salary structure—currently $18,740 per year for individuals (plus generous stipend for dependent children). Contact **Search Committee, 300 W. Apsley, Philadelphia, PA 19144; (215) 849-2178; TOS.PA@ecunet.org.**

Nanny position: Children 8 and 12. Salary negotiable, minimum $6.50/hr. **Call (316) 682-1661.**

Morgantown (W.Va.) Church of the Brethren, fully united with the Mennonite Church, seeks a full-time **pastor**. Position available Aug. 1. Located 70 miles south of Pittsburgh, Morgantown is the home of West Virginia University.

Contact **Dennis Overman, Search Committee Chair, 461 Overhill St., Morgantown, WV 26505, (304)292-9760,** e-mail **doverman@wvu.edu**.

Bethel College wishes to fill a faculty position in the **department of nursing**, beginning in August. Ph.D. preferred, M.S.N. required, with med/surg expertise. Commitment to undergraduate teaching and advising, interdisciplinary collaboration, and Bethel's mission as a church-related college are essential. This is a continuing appointment, with qualifications and experience considered for both salary and rank. Applications for this position should include resume, names and addresses of three references, and recent graduate school transcript if applicable. Consideration of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

Materials should be sent to **Dr. Janice Unruh Davidson, Nursing Program Director, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117**. Bethel is an equal opportunity employer, and especially encourages women and minorities to apply.

The anticipated integrated **women's organization of the WMSC/WM** invites applications for the full-time equivalent position of **executive coordinator** (may be filled by more than one person). Position to begin October 1997. Job description is available through Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, 722 Main St., P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, (316) 283-5100; or Women's Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church, 421 S. Second St., Suite 600, Elkhart, IN 46516-3243, (219) 294-7131.

Applications should be sent by **Aug. 15** to: **Elizabeth Klassen, Search Committee Chair, 237 Becker St., Kitchener, ON N2B 1X8.**

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks to appoint a faculty member to a half-time **position in church music**, beginning Aug. 15, 1998, with a view to continuing employment. The position includes leading the seminary choir, teaching courses in hymnology, contributing music and arts perspectives in team teaching. Expertise in voice and piano or organ is necessary. Competency to teach in the arts or worship is also preferred. Experience in a congregational setting and some theological training are also preferred. Candidate shall have, or be a candidate for, an advanced music degree, doctoral level preferred. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer.

Please send letter of application and resume by **Sept. 15** to **Dean's Office, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; (219) 296-6207.**

Interim Reference Librarian: Bluffton College invites applications for a one-year, interim position of reference librarian. Master's degree in library science from an ALA-accredited program required. Experience with providing service using general reference sources, both print and electronic; experience using Dialog; and evidence of excellent communication skills necessary. Prefer experience with government documents or interlibrary loan, Passport for Windows, and a working knowledge of computer hardware and software, including DOS and Windows. Responsibilities include assisting library users with online, CD-ROM and print resources; classroom instruction; interlibrary loan, and government documents collection management. Some evening and weekend hours required. Bluffton College is a four-year, Christian liberal arts college affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church. Musselman Library houses over 130,000 volumes and subscribes to more than 400 periodicals and is a 10 percent selective depository for U.S. government publications. The library uses the Horizon automated system. Consideration of applications continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at **www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac**.

Submit letter of application, resume or vita, three letters of reference, and unofficial transcripts to **Amy M. Tabler, Assistant to the V.P. and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.** EOE

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Reviews

MUSIC

HOPE FOR THE LIGHT

The Charity of Night, *by Bruce Cockburn (High Romance Music/ Rykodisc, 1996, $15.98 U.S. CD, $10.98 U.S. audiocassette)*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

Bruce Cockburn, a Canadian, is probably more familiar in Canada, where his music sometimes actually gets played on the radio, than in the United States. Most listeners in North America or in Europe think of him as a "Christian artist"—but you won't hear him on friendly local WPTL. As one fan I know put it recently, "Bruce thinks too much"; his kind of gritty Christianity and the way it affects his music is too disturbing to the least-common-denominator format of most contemporary Christian music radio.

Take "Night Train," the first cut on Cockburn's latest release. I heard him play this song live in Boulder, Colo., the evening that Timothy McVeigh, convicted in the Oklahoma City bombing, received the death penalty from a Denver jury. The song begins, "Not a knife-throw from here you can hear the night train passing/That's the sound somebody makes when they're getting away/Leaving next week's hanging jury far behind them/Prisoner only of the choices they've made …" Its last line says, "And in the absence of a vision there are nightmares/ And in the absence of compassion there is cancer/Whose banner flies over palaces and mean streets. …"

This was the tour to promote *The Charity of Night*; he's played that song everywhere he's been. It was not a specific commentary on the McVeigh jury verdict. Yet like so much of Cockburn's songs, it fit the tenor of the times as though tailored to it, and it contains at its core a value that's really worthy of the adjective "Christian."

Cockburn is a poet—how else could he use words like "lascivious" and "pheromone," both in a song with "charity" in its title, and have it work? He's an angry world citizen—"The Mines of Mozambique" is about the millions of landmines left in that country's ground after years of civil war, a scenario familiar to Mennonites who know of Mennonite Central Committee's de-mining work in Asia. He's a man at mid-life whose words echo in the guts: "I've proven who I am so many times/The magnetic strip's worn thin/And each time I was someone else/And everyone was taken in" ("Pacing the Cage"); "Derailed and desperate/How did I get here?/Hanging from this high wire/By the tatters of my faith" ("The Whole Night Sky").

Those who know Bruce Cockburn's work over the years know it has been infused with dark imagery. This album is not an exception, full of lines like, "On the skyline dark against the stars/A solitary horseman—waiting" ("Get Up Jonah") and, "I wear my shadows/Where they're harder to see/But they follow me everywhere" ("Birmingham Shadows"). However, as the album title indicates, it's also a work full of hope for the light. The above line from "Birmingham Shadows" is followed by this one: "I guess that should tell me I'm travelling toward light."

What Bruce Cockburn does is acknowledge the ambiguity, giving in neither to the shadows nor the easy answers. The final song on the album, a take on Psalm 23, concludes this way: "Oh you been leading me/Beside strange waters/Streams of beautiful/ Lights in the night/But where is my pastureland/In these dark valleys?/ If I loose my grip/Will I take flight?"

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Moving? Let us know six weeks ahead.

BOOKS

MORE ILLUMINATION

Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development (2nd edition), *edited by Joann Wolski Conn (Paulist Press, 1996, 479 pages, $24.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by June Mears Driedger, Goshen, Ind.

It's been 10 years since the first edition of *Women's Spirituality* was published. During that decade increasing numbers of women were licensed and ordained as ministers. Those women who initially broke the ministerial barrier grew older, reshaping their experiences and perceptions. Both of these "events" led to publishing a

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second edition with its ensuing deeper and expansive understanding of women and ministry. The second edition is as illuminating as the first.

The structure of the book remains the same. The first section discusses issues in women's spirituality, the second focuses on women's psychological development, the third highlights characteristics of religious development, and the fourth examines a revisioning of the Christian spirituality tradition. Most of the chapters have been rewritten by many of the authors found in the first edition, with richer insights and understandings into their fields of study.

There are two particularly intriguing additions. One is an excerpt from *Letters of Spiritual Direction* by Jane de Chantal, the close spiritual friend of Francis de Sales from the 16th century. Traditionally Jane has been discounted as a disciple of de Sales rather than regarded as his equal (in much the same way that Claire of Assisi has been relegated to disciple of Francis rather than treated as an equal and co-founder of the Franciscans). Chantal's voice of wisdom, counsel and direction is delightful to read.

The other is a revisioning of sorts of Therese of Lisieux by Wolski Conn. Again, traditionally Therese was dismissed as flighty, simple, sentimental and immature. However, Wolski Conn argues that Therese should be regarded as "a resource for 'a discipleship of equals.'" She then convincingly illuminates how Therese's faith was frankly her own original vision of life.

One final note: Many of the "religious writers" in this text are Catholic and write from their Catholic context. While this is interesting, I look forward to a similar book from an Anabaptist context. Nevertheless, *Women's Spirituality* is a significant and welcome resource.

READING OUR EXPERIENCE

Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life, *by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat (Scribner, 1996, 608 pages, $27.50 U.S., $37 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editor

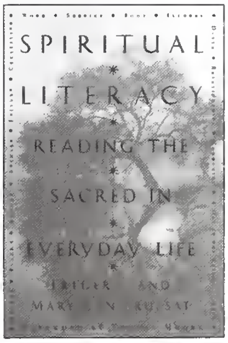
Here is an excellent book to pick up and read a few quotations before bed, or as part of a morning ritual.

Be prepared, however, for the universality of the authors' approach. While the Brussats are Christians, they draw on many different traditions for quotations on a variety of subjects: things, places, nature, leisure, creativity, service, body, relationships, animals, community.

They define spiritual literacy as "the ability to read the signs written in the texts of our own experiences." The readings they offer "help us discover the sacred in our everyday life."

The book is more than simply a list of quotations. The authors intersperse through the book an "alphabet of spiritual literacy," with two-page elaborations on such practices as attention, being present, compassion, devotion, enthusiasm, faith and gratitude. At the end of each chapter are tips for practicing spiritual literacy with the subject of that chapter. These include "conversations/journal entries," "activities/projects" and "spiritual exercises/rituals."

The last chapter uses quotations to go through "A Day in the Spiritual Life." These activities begin with "waking up" and end with "getting a late-night snack." In between is everything from washing your hands to making breakfast to sending the children to school to putting away socks to driving in traffic to writing a letter to eating pie to brushing your teeth.



The book includes a list of sources for the quotations, so that readers may follow their interests in certain areas, plus an extensive index of both subjects and writers.

Some may dismiss this book as too inclusive, not enough exclusively Christian. Others will welcome insights from wherever they come. The goal of the book, however, is a worthy one, that we learn to see God's presence in our everyday life.

Rosthern Mennonite Church invites applications for the position of **lead pastor**. Duties to commence as early as Oct. 1, with later starting dates negotiable.

Resumes should be mailed to **Search Committee, Box 454, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0,** by **Aug. 15.**

Resources

- **HIV/AIDS: A Christian Response** is a manual produced by Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia. Chapters cover HIV/AIDS and our church, ourselves, our children, our world, women and more. Order for $10 Cdn. from MCC B.C., P.O. Box 2038, Abbotsford, BC V2T 3T8; (604) 850-6639.
- **Driving the Amish** by Jim Butterfield (Herald Press, 1997, $12.99 U.S./$18.75 Cdn.) gives a window on Amish life through stories and photographs.
- **The Lord's Supper: Believers Church Perspectives**, edited by Dale R. Stoffer (Herald Press, 1997, $24.99 U.S./$35.75 Cdn.) provides an overview of the history, theology and practice of the Lord's Supper.
- **Brother, Brother** is a video that reenacts a true "good Samaritan" incident where Jews, Muslims and Christians banded together to save a stabbed Israeli soldier in Nazareth. The video also profiles the work of the Nazareth Hospital. Available from Mennonite Media, 1-800-999-3534.
- **Dewdrops on Spiderwebs: Connections Made Visible** by Susan Classen (Herald Press, 1997, $9.99 U.S./$14.25 Cdn.) is a devotional that invites us to enter more deeply into our unique experience of God in daily life.
- **The Story That Shapes Us: Sermons by John H. Neufeld** (CMBC Publications, 1997, $12 Cdn.) commemorates Neufeld's work as president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College 1984-1997.
- **The Storekeeper's Daughter: A Memoir** by Katie Funk Wiebe (Herald Press, 1997, $9.99 U.S./$14.25 Cdn.) shares stories of the author's family, the trek from Russia to Canada, the Depression and more.
- **To Hear God's Word, Listen to the World: The Liberation of Spirituality** by William Reiser, S.J. (Paulist Press, 1997, $14.95 U.S.) says that the poor are an inescapable part of prayer life and the world is a "school for prayer."

Questions? Call 1-800-757-5101.

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Editorial

Blinders

When Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32), he confronted his listeners' illusion that they were already free. If we apply Jesus' words to ourselves, we have to ask, What illusions do we live under? How are we not free?

Often we don't want to know the truth. Truth can hurt. We'd rather live with an illusion. Perhaps we are attached to a behavior that hurts others—or even ourselves—yet no one tells us. Or we may not hear them when they do. The behavior may be something as minor as a tendency to interrupt others. Or it may be as major as an addiction to alcohol that hinders our acting responsibly toward others.

Freedom from such behaviors requires seeing them as wrong and seeing the need to change. But this is often the most difficult part of becoming free. As Walter Wink writes about living under a "domination system": "Like addicts who cannot tell how distorted their perceptions have become until they get off drugs, we too cannot recognize the depth of our alienation from life until we are well on the way toward healing" (*Engaging the Powers*).

People used to put blinders on horses to prevent them from being distracted by objects at their sides. Ruling powers also place blinders on people to keep them from questioning the way things are, to let them see only what these powers want them to see.

This is what is going on in Israel, as Kathleen Kern shows in her article (page 3). Her advice is, Get off the tour bus and talk with people on the street. Visit their homes, listen to their stories.

'Terrorists': My experience affirms this. More than two years ago I was part of a group of journalists who visited the West Bank under the direction of Mennonite Central Committee. We met and spoke with Palestinians and Israelis, with political, religious and educational leaders as well as with settlers. We asked many questions and learned a great deal. What we learned did not make the situation there simpler to comprehend but even more complicated. Yet the people became more real to us, so that we see them not as "terrorists" but as human beings trying to live decent lives.

This same kind of questioning, of getting to know people and situations, needs to happen wherever we are. I have a friend who used to wear a T-shirt that read, "Question authority." I liked it. It's an important message. But when my children question my authority, I don't like it. I want them to do what I say.

Is this not true for all of us? When we or our way of doing things is in charge, we don't want the boat rocked. But if we are experiencing injustice, we want the authority that maintains that injustice questioned.

Mennonites: About a year ago, a *Washington Post* reporter came to central Kansas looking for Mennonites. However, she wrote in her article weeks later, she didn't find any. Those of us living in this area, which has one of the largest concentrations of Mennonites in the world, were aghast. Why didn't she come and ask us? We could have introduced her to many different Mennonites.

Yet we were not completely surprised, because often people have an idea of what Mennonites look like (black clothes and riding in buggies), and if they don't see their conception of Mennonites, then there must not be any.

Do we do the same thing with other groups of people? This is what happens in the Holy Land, where Palestinians are invisible to most tourists. It also happens here in North America, where we fail to see or get to know poor people, African-Americans, the homeless, the mentally ill, gay and lesbian people, those who drink or smoke, the less educated, the more educated, fundamentalists, liberals. The list is endless. Choose the ones you don't see because of the blinders you may be wearing.

Taking off blinders will mean hitting the pavement, asking questions, getting to know others—and in the process getting to know ourselves and the prejudices we carry. Becoming free will require hearing the truth. Perhaps this is one reason Jesus said to love our enemies. They often have a clearer view of our faults and are more willing to tell us.

We all wear blinders of one kind or another. And as soon as we take off one pair, another one forms. As we help one another see the truth, we will be on the way toward healing, toward the freedom Jesus promised. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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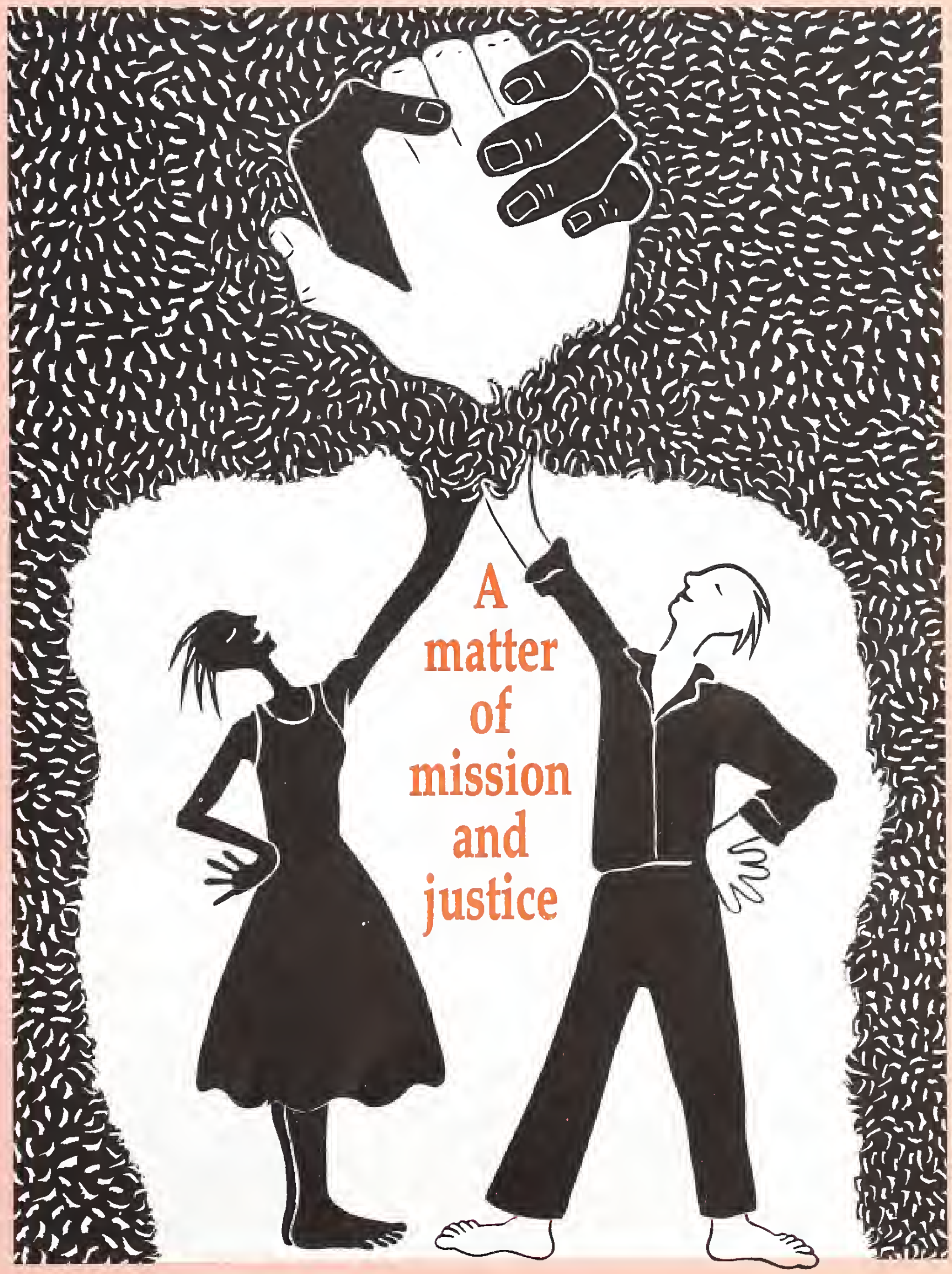


A matter of mission and justice

The benefits of inclusive language

Prologue

The fact that most of us can read the Bible is due to the church making the effort to translate the Scriptures into the language we understand. That impulse for making God's Word more accessible to people is what is behind this issue on inclusive language.

Often inclusive language is labeled "politically correct" and ignored. However, as our lead article (page 3) argues, if we do not learn to use inclusive language, i.e., language that includes women and men, our mission of bringing the gospel of Christ to people will be seriously harmed.

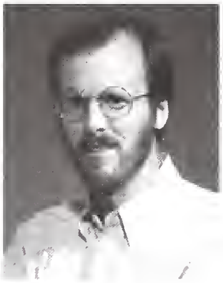
The articles on pages 3 to 6 are excerpted and adapted from a pamphlet published by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4. I recommend studying the pamphlet with your Sunday school class or prayer group.

Marg Rempel (page 7) offers her views on the value of inclusive language in the church.

Read and ponder Dora Dueck's piece about Mennonite anti-Semitism (page 9), and be inspired by Jo Anne Lingle's example of courage and faith in speaking for the poor (page 10).

Columnists Denise Preller and J.B. Miller help us look at our "inclusiveness temperature" (page 11) and our consumerism (page 12).

Our lead news story gives a summary of the special General Conference Mennonite Church sessions in Winnipeg July 6-8. Look for more stories and photos in our next issue. *gh*



Next issue: Photos and stories from Winnipeg '97

Cover: Artwork by Lora Jost

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Language for mission:

toward an inclusive church

Christians need to communicate the message of Christ with clarity in every age.

Gender-language has undergone significant changes in our society in recent years. In the past, the term "man" included both males and females. For many people in today's society, that is no longer the case. One might wish that the change had not happened, or one might try to ignore the change, but that does not alter the facts. Christians need to communicate the message of Christ with clarity in every age.

What do we mean by inclusive language? Inclusive language is language that communicates that the gospel of Christ brings salvation for both women and men. To proclaim that "Christ died for all people" is not the same as to say, "Christ died for all men." Inclusive language is language that acknowledges women as participants in the church, both as proclaimers and audience.

What is the biblical basis for inclusive language? The biblical basis for inclusive language is found in Genesis 1 as well as in the Bible's revelation of Jesus Christ. According to Genesis 1:27, God created humankind, both men and women, in his image. No distinction of degree or worth between women and men is indicated in this passage. The text emphasizes that women reflect God's image as fully as do men.

In the New Testament the inclusive message of Christ is expressed in Galatians 3:28. In this text Paul challenges the church to overcome the deepest and most significant differences that divide the church and to become one body in Christ.

Inclusive language removes the constant need for both women and men to transpose the language they hear. It removes the confusion. It allows the church to communicate directly and accurately. It makes clear that the gospel of Christ provides salvation and liberation for all people, both women and men. What you hear is what is meant.

Does language influence behavior? Language influences the way we treat one another. People who study situations of conflict and abuse observe that the language people use significantly influences their attitude toward others and the way they treat people. A person who is angry toward someone will frequently use violent language. If therapists or counselors can persuade them to use nonviolent language, their attitude often softens and their behavior becomes more peaceful.

Inclusive language is language that communicates that the gospel of Christ brings salvation for both women and men.

If we use exclusive language, we are picturing and creating a world for ourselves and our hearers that does not include women as equal partners.

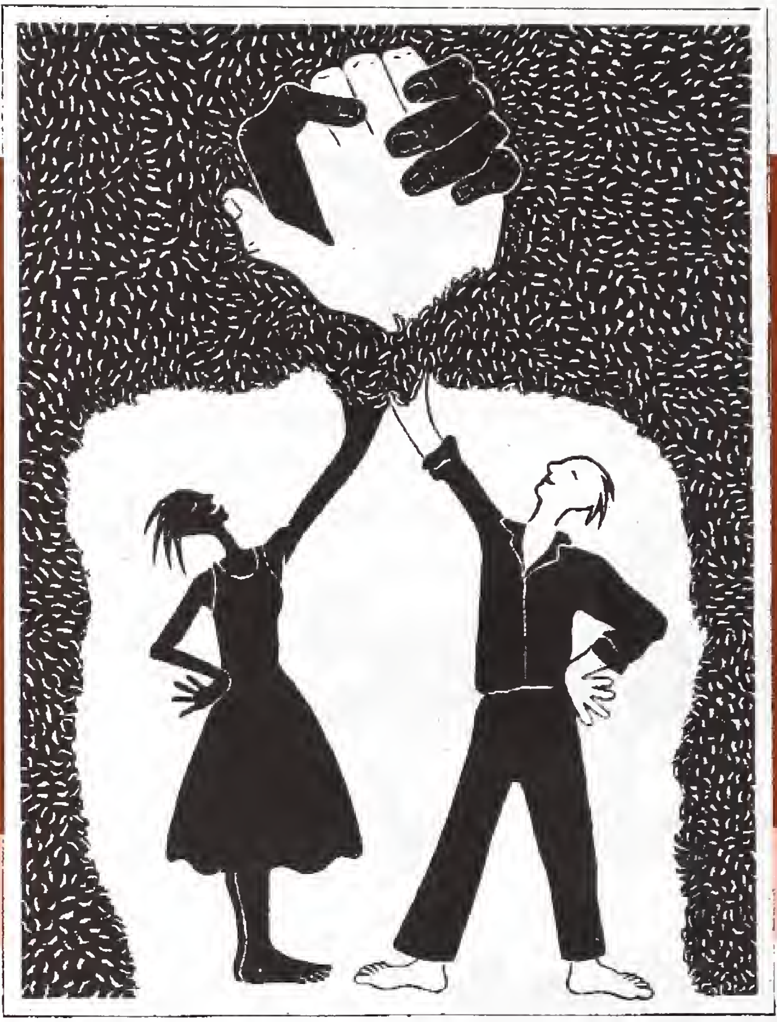


Illustration by Lora Jost

Thus the language we use affects the way we act. The language of inclusion in the early church at first led to the inclusion of women. Then the language of exclusion in the surrounding Roman world gradually led to the exclusion of women. This practice of exclusion resulted in a language of inferiority about women. The language of inferiority led to centuries of practice in which women were treated as inferior.

If we use exclusive language, we are picturing and creating a world for ourselves and our hearers that does not include women as equal partners. Women come to be pictured as inferior, less worthy than men, and not to be taken as seriously when they speak.

Worst of all, exclusive language may condone and lead to violence toward women and girls. Even though exclusive language need not directly stir people to act violently toward women and girls, using language that signals that women and girls are not considered as important as men and boys, or are considered to be inferior partners, may create a climate in which harassment or abuse of women can be quietly ignored, passively excused or even actively permitted.

What does inclusive language have to do with language about God? The Bible teaches that God is greater than humans and far above what humans can think. God is beyond human experience and beyond human language. God is greater than any manifestation of life on earth. God is greater than either maleness or femaleness.

God's gift of language allows us to think spiritual thoughts and to speak about God. The Bible reveals God's majesty and provides us with a rich fund of names for God (e.g. Psalms 8 and 91). One of the temptations throughout history has been to try to capture the essence of God in language and ideas that are too small (e.g. Isaiah 40:12-26).

The Bible has a rich range of metaphors, similes and adjectives that it uses to point to God. None of these words and expressions gives us the full picture of who God is, but when they are taken together they present us with a fuller witness.

Genesis 1:26-27 reads, "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them." The writer states that God is great enough to include both human maleness and femaleness.

Inclusive language invites us to think of God in majestic and expanded ways, based on the Bible. This expanded view of God is reflected in a number of biblical texts. They are texts we have tended to overlook.

In Matthew the Bible speaks about God as our heavenly Father, who calls us to be perfect as he is perfect (Matthew 5:48). In Isaiah the Bible compares God to a woman who cries out in labor and gasps and pants (Isaiah 42:14). Job asks, "From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven?" (Job 38:29).

What is at stake is the missionary task of the church grounded in obedience to the biblical witness.

To become more inclusive in our language does not mean discarding traditional language about God. Rather it invites us to expand our traditional repertoire, some of which has been shaped by our religious history and culture. This expansion can happen when we invite the richness of the biblical language for God to nurture our faith and language.

Does inclusive language lead to rejection of the Bible as the basis of faith and life for the church? The Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition has always attempted to base its life and faith upon the Bible. Inclusive language expresses the desire to be fully biblical in the use of language about humans and God.

This discussion recognizes that some of our language in the past has been based upon only a portion of Scripture or has sometimes even limited the gospel message in an unbiblical manner. Inclusive language is the desire to correct some of the omissions of the past by being more fully biblical in the language we use.

What is at stake is the missionary task of the church grounded in obedience to the biblical witness. Will the church be able to communicate the gospel to the people in the church and beyond? Will the gospel being communicated reflect the full biblical message?

Excerpted from "Language for Mission: Toward an Inclusive Church," Council on Faith and Life Pamphlet #4 published by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Copies of the pamphlet may be ordered from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, fax (204) 831-5675, e-mail cmc@mbnet.mb.ca. Cost is $7.50 Cdn. for 10 copies.

What about 'women should be silent...'?

What about the biblical texts that call upon women to be silent in public, obey their husbands and be subordinate to men? These texts can be divided into three different kinds.

One kind advocates equality between men and women. 1 Corinthians 7:1-7 is an example. Verses 3 to 5 are clear examples of equality between men and women in a world in which sexual inequality was the norm.

Another group of texts is usually called household codes ("Haustafeln"). The household code in Ephesians 5:21-33 begins with, "Be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ." This is a call for women and men to become subordinate to each other under the lordship of Christ, and is not simply a call for women to be subordinate to men.

Traditionally the household codes have been read to place emphasis on the verse that says, "Wives, be subject to your husbands." Reading the codes more carefully reveals that they do not call for women to be lorded over by men. The whole code is a call to accept the lordship of Christ and, under this lordship, for women and men to respect and treat each other as equals in Christ.

There are some texts that call women to be silent in the church (e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:34). Many people see these texts as speaking to specific situations in the early church where such an admonition may have been necessary. For example, in some cases women needed to be silent in order to avoid confusion or disorder. Such texts are similar to those that admonish women to wear head coverings and not to cut their hair. These texts speak to the culture of the day but are not authoritative for other contexts. *Excerpted from "Language for Mission: Toward an Inclusive Church"*

What about your congregation?

Questions for discussion

1. Where is our congregation today?

Anyone who thinks language isn't important need only listen in on a discussion about inclusive language. How we talk is important to many people.

Assess what your congregation's practice actually is. Do you use masculine terms? Feminine terms? Neuter terms? Do you use them to refer to people? To God? Write down all the terms you can think of used in church in the past month that refer to people in general, and all the images for God. Analyze them for gender.

Does everyone agree that the gender-language used means the same thing? Or do some people think the language is inclusive while others think it is not? Are people comfortable with the images used for God? Do some people want to use feminine images while others do not? Are differences of opinion accepted, or do they arouse anger and irritation? Is this issue volatile or not?

2. How does our congregation understand language change?

What kind of experiences with language change have people in your congregation had? Can people remember studying literature in school that they had problems understanding? Has anyone studied a foreign language? How many people aren't always sure what their children are talking about? List as many different kinds of language change and language conflict as you can.

What does this mean? Does language change shape or reflect change in society? What effect does language change have on the way people in your congregation talk, write, behave or otherwise communicate? How do you feel about these changes?

Have people write a short descriptive paragraph using happy language, then rewrite it using sad or angry language. Then write a paragraph using feminine language and rewrite it using masculine language. Write a paragraph about God, using masculine images, and a paragraph using feminine images. What does this show? How do people respond differently to the different uses of language?

3. What does "inclusive" mean, anyhow?

What kinds of experiences have people in your congregation had that have made you feel included, part of the group? What kinds of experiences make you feel excluded? What would an ideal world look like in which everyone felt included?

God's invitation includes everyone. Our congregations are called to proclaim God's word to everyone and to invite everyone in. Does your congregation invite other people in? Why or why not? When you do invite people in, what kinds of things do you do to make them feel included and at home? Analyze your activities, programs, bulletin, sermons or foyer behavior for things that might make people feel included or excluded.

How does language fit into this scheme? Have people think of experiences where the type of language used has distracted from the goal of mission, and instances where it has empowered the goal of mission.

4. What does the Bible say about change, inclusion and God?

From creation to the time of the apostles, society in the Bible underwent significant change. Ever since the fall, people have been separated from God but are welcomed into God's realm. How does the Bible invite people to come to God? How did Jesus make people feel included? Whom did he invite? How? What bearing does language have on these questions?

Passages to look at include Matthew 5:23-24; 9:10-17; Mark 2:13-27; Luke 6:1-11; 7-36-50; 10:25-37; John 4:5-9; 10:7-18; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 10; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; James 2:1-9.

What kind of language does the Bible use about God? Read Psalm 91 and Isaiah 49. What are some of the images used there?

5. Where to from here?

Is your congregation comfortable with where you are in terms of using language that includes all people and uses a variety of images for God? Or are people pushing for change? Take a look at your language assessment (see question 1). What changes can you as a group make that will satisfy some while not discomforting others? Is there room for dialogue that respects all points of view?

From "Language for Mission: Toward an Inclusive Church"

Don't Panic!

Marg Rempel

If we are to be good communicators to our world, in our time, and in our place, we must be sensitive to the message of our language.

When you hear the term "inclusive language," is your first reaction to feel upset or threatened, or do you feel a comfortable "Yes, at last"? Language can free us or enslave us—it's just a tool of communication, and a constantly changing one at that. (Thirty years ago we did not have words like "fax machine" or "internet.") There is incredible power in word pictures—those images that come to mind when we hear words.

The inclusive language debate has two aspects. One has to do with the language used to describe the followers of Christ, and the second has to do with the language used to describe God.

The first one is probably easier to address. Why use male-dominated terms in situations where these terms are clearly meant to refer to both men and women? If you insist that when you say "he" you mean "everyone," than I wonder why you cannot say "we" or "us" or "person" or "people," if that's what you mean. Some discussion on this topic occurred during the process of putting together *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. Many members of the five participating churches wanted the language of the hymns be more inclusive. For example, the familiar "Faith of Our Fathers" is printed with the alternate wording, "Faith of the Martyrs." I appreciate that. I cannot sing "sons of God" and feel included as a "son." My faith is not threatened but enhanced by a change in language.

The second aspect to the inclusive language debate has to do with how we address God. Male culture and male language have dominated the ways God is described in Scripture. However, many feminine images are also present: mother eagle, midwife, comforting mother.

In Luke 15:8-10, God is described as a woman who has lost a coin and sweeps and cleans her home until she finds the lost coin and then calls the neighbors together to celebrate and rejoice.

God is also referred to in many ways that are neither male nor female: strong, compassionate, judge, gracious, rock, fortress, glorious, light, Lord, righteous, love, peace, mediator, holy, mighty, wonderful, counselor.

Referring to God only as 'Father' narrows the nature of God, narrows our understanding and affects our attitudes.

Referring to God only as "Father" narrows the nature of God, narrows our understanding and affects our attitudes. I'm not suggesting that we never refer to God as Father but that we also consider other titles that provide a more balanced view. We do not need to be fearful that if we refer to God less often as Father that we will lack language to ascribe to God.

Who in our congregation has noticed that neither of our pastors makes male reference to God? Has anyone felt excluded because of that? Has anyone else even noticed? Even though I've never said so publicly before, as a woman I have appreciated that sensitivity. The one who is my Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer is larger than and beyond human gender.

I beg you not to panic. Being more sensitive and careful in our use of language does not mean the end of our faith or of our church community. On the contrary, it can communicate a warmer, more caring message. The truths of Scripture do not change. We use language to communicate those truths. Language changes. The world we live in changes. If we are to be good communicators to our world, in our time, and in our place, we must be sensitive to the message of our language. Remember: The message being received may be different from the intention of the sender.

Marg Rempel is a member of Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church. This article is reprinted from the June 1996 issue of the Steinbach Mennonite Church Echoes.

Letters

CARTOON, ARTICLE HAD IMPACT

I was "convicted" by the Pontius' Puddle cartoon in the June 10 issue (page 12) because it is so close to home. While I haven't gotten around to volunteering as I've always intended to, I have managed to find time to figure out a financial plan and invest in (mostly) socially responsible stocks. Ouch! The cartoon was encouragement to keep striving in this area.

The article "10 Ways to Serve Our Servers" (page 7) also struck me because my dad is a pastor and I agree with many of the article's points. Why are we so quick to criticize and so slow to praise? My own church does not have paid pastoral staff. We all split up the duties and take turns, but compliments are still important. The point about telling the pastor when something he or she said made an impact is why I'm writing—because the issue you put together did have an impact on me. Thanks for putting together a good issue. I hope the thoughtful and open-minded coverage of issues in *The Mennonite* will be able to continue when the magazines are merged. *Cheryl Martin, Mount Rainier, Md.*

Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity. Write to* The Mennonite, *P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

Mennonite Foundation seeks a **representative for the central region** (Ohio, western Pennsylvania and Michigan). The Foundation is a church-related organization providing planned giving support to an established donor constituency and charitable institutions. The ideal candidate will have experience in planned giving and investment principles and insurance products, with a CFP or other professional designation. Training in law or accounting will be a plus. Strong presentation and communication skills are essential. Job requires travel.

Send or fax letter of interest with resume to **Human Resources Department, Mennonite Mutual Aid, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; (fax) 219-533-5264.**

FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Kykotsmovi, Ariz.—We arrived at Hopi Mission School on Dec. 6, 1992, as Mennonite Voluntary Service workers. We had been detained by two snowstorms and settled in among drifts and cold weather—nothing new for South Dakotans. The school had closed for that year, but Glen found plenty to do repairing frozen water pipes, until Wilmer and Mary Leichty arrived in January to help work with the local board and churches to prepare for the reopening of the school in September 1993. Phyllis tackled the many boxes of books stacked in the hallway, sorting and cataloguing.

For four years Glen has served as maintenance man and Phyllis as librarian. Glen also served as acting principal, finishing out 1995. We helped provide a fenced-in playground, showers in the cafeteria building, a new cottage for housing, and the library moved to a larger, carpeted room with 6,000 books catalogued on the computer.

Through the years we have been inspired and warmed by the love and friendship of many Hopi families. Many worked hard to keep Hopi Mission School running smoothly. We have also been blessed by many answered prayers for principals, staff and solutions to problems. Always when things looked bleak, God had the answer. We thank God for the privilege of living and working among the Hopis for more than four years. We will probably finalize our work in late June, after supervising a couple of work groups. *Glen and Phyllis Boese*

Colombia—After living in the most violent city of the world (Santafe de Bogota) for eight months, we seem to have become accustomed to it. Today I listened to the morning news that reported that in the war in which the guerrilla, the army, the paramilitary and organized crime are involved, more than 30,000 die each year, especially young people. All our activities take place during the day. We try not to leave at night and if we do, we return early to our apartment. We have now learned to move around in the city and are acquainted with the principal streets.

Personally, I miss Wendy's hamburgers and chips for lunch.

We attend the Central Mennonite Church in the area of the city known as Berna when we are not traveling or visiting other congregations. It seems unbelievable, but during the last six weeks we have not spent a free weekend in Bogota. Sandra accompanies me in all my trips, in which we lead workshops, teach courses or preach. We greatly enjoy our work and as a couple we have experienced a great oneness.

In March we attended a meeting of the seminary directors of Colombia at the Christian University in the San Andres Islands. We met with the president, the dean and the board of the university in order to talk about accreditation agreements covered by the university. No Protestant seminary, only Catholic institutions, are approved or accepted by the Colombian government.

During Holy Week we led a series of workshops in the Mennonite Church of Pasto dealing with inner health and pastoral care. On Sunday we ended the meetings with the theme of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Four people, attending the church for the first time, received the Lord Jesus as their personal savior by profession of faith.

We have a prayer request. The financial company in which the seminary, CLARA, MENCOLDES and several individuals have funds, has been placed under the intervention of the government, an indication that it may be in bankruptcy. This has been a responsible organization for the past 30 years, but in the last few months it has made grave mistakes by loaning large amounts of money to a few people. *Marco and Sandra Guete*

Editor's note: If you are interested in communicating with a mission worker, write *The Mennonite,* P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

Speaking out

Mennonite anti-Semitism

A Jew's painful experience with Mennonites cries out for repentance.

Dora Dueck

Most of us enjoy hearing what "outsiders" think of our Mennonite community, especially when we're being extolled for our many virtues. There is no flattery and little comfort, however, in Ernest Sirluck's recollections of growing up in the Mennonite community of Winkler, Man. (as told in his autobiography *First Generation*, University of Toronto Press, 1996).

On his first day of school, in 1923, Ernest found himself surrounded by Mennonite children. They informed the 5-year-old that he was "a dirty Jew who had killed Christ." They illustrated this point with blows and pinches. The children stopped when the teacher appeared but were not reprimanded.

Ernest learned a lot in those five minutes. He learned what he, as a member of a Jewish community of eight or nine families in a largely Mennonite population, would experience many times in the years ahead.

"A favorite Bible verse in Winkler," he recalls, "was Matthew 27:25, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.'" He also recalls, "There was always someone willing to defend Christianity, and indeed racial purity, by hitting a smaller Jew."

The incidents were less frequent but more violent in high school. While the teacher sat with his head down, Ernest was choked to unconsciousness by a certain Peter Doerksen, a large fellow, after an exchange of words about Jews. He was thoroughly beaten over the same issue by Victor Unruh, son of a preacher.

Nazi connections: Ernest fought back with his fists as best he could, and with his intellectual rebuttals. Other forms of anti-Semitism were harder to combat. He was bitterly hurt to discover that an older friend, Jack Funk, whom he had liked and trusted, was president of the newly-formed local branch of the Canadian Nationalist Party, an organization with Nazi connections.

"There's nothing personal in it," Jack said to him, "and I hope we can stay friends."

Ernest replied that if Jack believed the Jews to be what the Nazis said, he couldn't be friends with him; if he didn't believe it but had joined anyway, knowing what they were doing in Germany, he was worse than they were.

"I never fully got over the pain of the betrayal," Ernest writes more than 60 years later. "It was one of the sharpest and most hurtful lessons I ever received about how precarious the friendship of a Gentile for a Jew can be."

Ernest's memoirs refer with affection to several Mennonites of the community, particularly Dr. C.W. Wiebe, who occasionally invited the young man along on his calls to deliver babies. The exceptions, however, scarcely balance what one senses is a great weight of pain, one experienced at both the hands of individuals and as a result of the community's belief system. Ernest writes of "the self-hatred that endemic anti-Semitism can induce."

Anti-Semitism among Mennonites of the past has been well-documented. It can even be, if not accepted, put into context. The facts of scholars take a different and disturbing twist, however, when confirmed by someone who so vividly remembers being hated, not for what he did, but for who he was.

It's also true that attitudes about Jews have changed within the Mennonite community since those years. Still, I wish I could, on behalf of my people, ask Ernest Sirluck's forgiveness.

Dora Dueck is a writer and member of Jubilee Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg. This is reprinted from the April 4 issue of Mennonite Brethren Herald.

"Speaking out" and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite.*

Invitation

Joan Rae Mills

You served breakfast
on the beach,
broke bread with thousands
at a hillside picnic,
celebrated
at the marriage in Cana.
Exciting events—
all of these.

But this morning
it's only me,
on an ordinary Monday
requesting the honor
of your presence
at my kitchen table
for coffee and conversation.
Comfort comes in knowing
You require neither
feasts nor crowds—
only an invitation.

Joan Rae Mills lives in Greenwood, Del.

Called to speak up for the poor

Jo Anne Lingle puts her body on the line in defense of those killed because of the School of the Americas.

Marty Shupack

The Bible says, "Speak up for those who cannot speak, for the rights of the destitute. Speak up, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31:8, 9).

Mennonite peace activists and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Washington Office, along with many other church-based advocacy groups, have been trying to follow that mandate, working over the last several years to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) in Fort Benning, Ga.

Jo Anne Lingle, a Mennonite mother of eight and grandmother of two, spent two months in prison last year for protesting the school's existence.

Since 1946, SOA has provided training for Latin American military and policy officers. Its graduates include former Panama dictator Manuel Noriega; Salvadoran death squad leader Roberto d'Aubuisson; 19 of the 26 Salvadoran military officers cited in the 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in San Salvador, and many other dictators and military leaders accused of human rights abuses.

In a new revelation of improper activity, the U.S. Department of Defense released a report last September admitting that between 1982 and 1991, SOA used lesson plans and training manuals that advocated extrajudicial executions, torture, blackmail, the use of sodium pentothal ("truth serum") and other forms of coercion.

The Defense Department says the materials were "not consistent with approved doctrine" and were used only because of bureaucratic oversight. They were discontinued in 1992, after having been distributed to perhaps thousands of military officers from several Latin American countries.

Jo Anne, 58, a member of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, is one of many peace activists who have been calling for the closing of SOA. She served a prison sentence from May 29-July 29, 1996, for criminal trespass as a result of her participation in a nonviolent protest at the school. Jo Anne was one of nine people who entered the Fort Benning military post on Nov. 16, 1995.

Tobin Miller Shearer (MCC)

Mennonite grandmother: *Jo Anne Lingle speaks with Fred Sahuc of the New Orleans People With AIDS Coalition, where she served as a Mennonite Central Committee U.S. service worker from 1992 to 1993. Jo Anne works at New Hope House in Barnesville, Ga., a hospitality house for visitors to people on death row.*

Although she had previously protested SOA's existence by participating in vigils and fasts at the Capitol, Jo Anne had not engaged in civil disobedience before. The judge at first sentenced Jo Anne and the other woman protester, 74-year-old Sister Claire O'Mara, an Ursuline nun, to three years probation. This changed after the women requested the same sentences as their fellow male protesters.

While serving her sentence in a federal prison work camp in Marianna, Fla., Jo Anne received some 200 letters from supporters. She describes her experience as positive because of the opportunity to meet other imprisoned women—several of whom she continues to be in contact with—and to hear their stories.

Last November a similar protest at Fort Benning involved more than 400 people, including Jo Anne and other Mennonites. Sixty of the protesters were detained by military police for three hours after entering military grounds.

Calling SOA "a relic of the Cold War," Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy has introduced a series of bills to shut it down, so far unsuccessfully. But the revelations about the training manuals have fueled the fire for those who argue the school should be closed.

According to Kennedy, "The Pentagon revealed what activists opposed to the school have been alleging for years—that foreign military officers were taught to torture and murder to achieve their political objectives."

Jo Anne Lingle, echoing Proverbs, has a simple, biblical reason for her activities against the School of the Americas: "I feel called to speak up for those whose voices cannot be heard, for the people who have been hurt or killed because of what the School of the Americas does."

Marty Shupack wrote this for Mennonite Central Committee's news service.

> ***"I feel called to speak up for those whose voices cannot be heard, for the people who have been hurt or killed because of what the School of the Americas does."***

Children are people, too

What is your inclusiveness temperature?

Our language has an impact on children.

Denise Preller

People have many opinions about the use of inclusive language. As you read the following opinions, take note of which you agree with most.

1. The use of inclusive language has gone too far.
2. The use of inclusive language is unnecessary and is in many cases harmful to the traditional way of doing things.
3. The use of inclusive language waters down and makes bland the interesting parts of language.
4. The use of inclusive language is too much trouble to incorporate all the time.
5. The use of inclusive language is OK in the secular arena, but the life of the church is different.
6. The use of inclusive language is not objectionable or, on the other hand, particularly desirable.
7. The use of inclusive language is really not that noticeable.
8. The use of inclusive language removes stereotypes and allows us to recognize "people."
9. The use of inclusive language is necessary to reflect the diversity of our populations and to make God's message accessible to all.
10. The use of inclusive language in our world has much farther to go.

What is your inclusiveness temperature? Are you giving a cold shoulder to this whole area with a chilly "1," or are you roasting marshmallows on the fire of your commitment with a "10"?

Denise Preller is director of God's Little Acre Preschool at North Danvers Mennonite Church, Danvers, Ill., where she is a member.

If you find yourself at either end of the spectrum, then you understand the important role language plays in our lives. I direct this discussion to the people in the middle, those not convinced that words make that much difference.

Sometimes our words teach an unintended message.

Every year I ask my 3- and 4-year-olds to draw a picture of God. I give them a large blank piece of paper and all the crayons and markers they want. When they ask, "What does God look like?" I say, "I was hoping you would draw me a picture so I would know."

Over the years children have drawn pictures of Jesus or of old men. A few have drawn pictures of angels, a few of clouds or stars or hearts, and one child refused to draw at all because God is invisible. Those children have represented 20 churches or more.

> ***The language we use, whether or not we choose to be inclusive in our choices, sends powerful messages to our children.***

But of all these drawings of God, not once has a child drawn a picture of a feminine God. (And I am not advocating teaching our young people to draw feminine pictures of God.) My conclusion as an educator is that those 20 churches are teaching their children that God is masculine.

At one of those 20 churches, during a Sunday morning visit, I gave up counting when I reached the 47th time the pastor referred to God as he in the sermon, and I did not include times he was referring to Jesus. The language we use, whether or not we choose to be inclusive in our choices, sends powerful messages to our children.

Inclusiveness is not limited to gender.

While teaching a Sunday school lesson not long ago, I read the children a passage in the Bible and used the expression "people who are enslaved" instead of "slaves." Immediately hands went in the air. "Who are these people?" "Why are they enslaved?"

I asked why they had never asked that before. They said they never noticed that they were people before. They thought they were "like part of the furniture or something."

This simple adjustment away from labeling people only as their disability or their position is true to the original Greek, where we find references to people who were blind, not "the blind," and people who were crippled, not "the crippled." Today that would read, "those who were disabled."

Many times in our English language we use one word to refer to an entire group of people: the poor, the rich, blacks, Asians, the churched, the unchurched and "Mennonites" are examples. By instead saying, "people who are poor," "people who are rich," "people of color" or "people who attend church," the stereotypes fall away, and people as individuals come into focus.

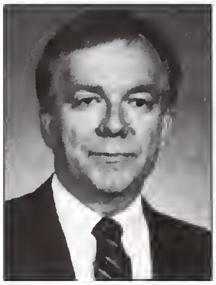
While I have long been committed to inclusive language, I have shaken my head over either conundrums or what seems out and out silliness in using inclusive language. Here are two examples:

In an article I wrote last year about children and being a good sport, I wrestled with the use of the expression "using good sportsmanship" vs. being a "good sport." Using "good sportspersonship" interrupted the flow of the article, and being a "good sport" didn't have the same meaning. Was there a right answer? I don't think so.

In the silliness vein, I prefer that instead of using the term children, which I believe connotes chattel, we should henceforth refer to them as "people who are young." Because, you see, children are people, too.

> ***Those 20 churches are teaching their children that God is masculine.***

Fiscal health



J.B. Miller is financial services product manager for AMA Solutions, Inc. in Chicago.

Hooked on accumulation

Here are some guidelines to consider before making your next purchase.

J.B. Miller

Several weeks ago, I moved. It wasn't the easiest move, since I was moving from one state to another, and I was moving out of a house that I had lived in for three years. Granted, I hate packing—sorting through rooms, closets and drawers has never been how I want to spend a weekend. But what made this move particularly difficult was the realization that I have spent money on things that I seldom or never used. What I have to admit is that I am, at times, a compulsive buyer. I see something that I like and buy it. I might use it for a short period of time, and then put it away, where it gathers dust until I move.

Start with my compact discs. Even though I've had a CD player for only four years, I have many CDs that I have listened to only once or twice. When I bought them I was sure it was music that I would enjoy. But today the majority of my CDs are on the shelf gathering dust.

Repeat that with books. I love to browse in bookstores. In fact, my best vacations are spent finding the local bookstore and spending time combing the shelves for a good read. This after visiting my hometown bookstore before I leave for vacation to make sure I have books to read while I'm away. But again, as I was packing I found books that were bought but never read.

In virtually every room of the house, from bookshelves to clothes closets, to shoe racks and kitchen shelves, the story was the same: things I bought but seldom used. In fact, some of these belongings had been moved from Florida when I relocated to Indiana seven years ago, and in those seven years they had not been used.

Since my latest move was out of state, and not across town, it seemed foolish to once again pack these unused items away, only to put them on a shelf somewhere in Illinois so they could gather dust. After giving some things to friends, making daily trips to Goodwill, and sending family items to relatives, I began to deal with the fact that I have made many unnecessary purchases over my lifetime. That realization didn't make me feel good.

> ***The temptation to buy is all around us.***

Conspicuous consumption: In fact, I realized I had become hooked into believing that I had to have the latest gadget, the hottest book, or 40 shirts in my closet. Having this would give me a sense of satisfaction that I didn't have before. Call it consumerism, conspicuous consumption or keeping up with the Joneses—I had been hooked. Realizing I was hooked was the easy part; fixing the situation may be more difficult. But I'm committed to try.

Since I like lists, I decided to commit to some guidelines for my purchases over the next year. Maybe you'll find them helpful if you, too, are hooked on accumulating things.

1. Develop and live within a budget. Only then will you know if your spending has some discipline.

2. Before buying anything, ask two questions, "Do I need it?" and, "Will I use it?"

3. Clean closets, bookshelves and music libraries at least annually. Give away items that haven't been used in the past 12 months.

The temptation to buy is all around us. I needed a move to realize just how my spending lacked discipline and focus. I hope that in the future my purchases will be planned events for things I need and not the result of a shopping experience that's supposed to make me feel good.

AMBS window

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Reflections

Taking the plunge

J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president

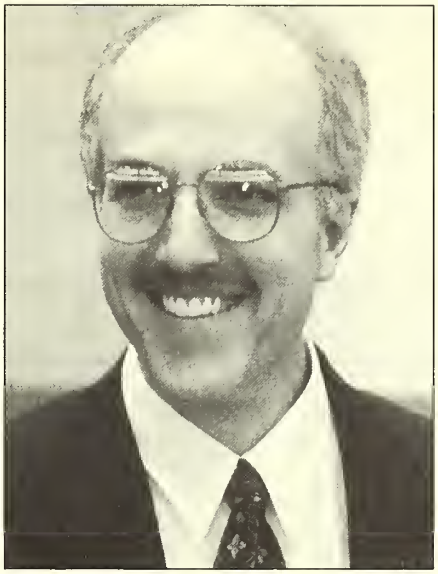
Three days before commencement in May, I was summoned out of a meeting to appear at a six-foot round swimming pool set up by seniors in the courtyard of the AMBS campus. The assembled faculty, staff and students heard a brief "sermon" on Numbers 20:8, then witnessed the new president "taking the plunge" as I was heaved into the water.

I gave (very wet!) hugs to the perpetrators as soon as I emerged from that baptism. Mirth spilled out across the AMBS campus, filtering through classrooms and offices. A good academic year was drawing to a close, and my dunking was the playful expression of a learning community in an energetic mode.

This has been a year of "taking the plunge" for me and my family. When we moved to Elkhart at Christmas, after nearly six years in England, I knew my job would have many demands. I knew my family and I would need to make a cross-cultural adjustment to life in North America. But we have deeply sensed the presence of God in these days of transition.

I offer the following observations after six months at AMBS:

- I have great hope for the future of the Mennonite church. Students on this campus are among the most gifted of their generation. These are men and women of character, conviction and commitment who will provide able leadership for congregations, conferences, mission projects and schools.
- Increased enrollment is like adrenalin to a seminary. A year ago AMBS had 158 students. This spring we had 203 and expect an increase in the autumn. This surge of interest has energized AMBS and given urgency to our planning for the future.



- Hundreds of AMBS alumni are serving the church with creativity and passion. I met scores of alumni at Pastors' Week in January and have delighted in fellowship with others in my visits across the church.
- AMBS plays a vital role as a place where Anabaptist understandings of prayer, Bible study, evangelism, peacemaking and service take deep root in the lives of those who will lead the church.
- A seminary needs to prepare leaders who can use the best of recent information technology. In the next few months AMBS anticipates receiving a $200,000 grant from the Lilly Foundation to enhance our use of computer technology in classroom and library.
- It's worth the expense to keep AMBS strong for the future of the church. Tuition covers less than a quarter of the actual cost of education at this school. I thank God for many people who make modest donations and for those who are able to give large gifts. I can think of no better investment than in the lives of men and women who will shape the church in a new century.
- Prayer is the lifeblood of this school and the mission of the church. Countless people have told me they pray for students and faculty here, and scores of students are nurtured here by structured spiritual direction. A robust, Jesus-centered spirituality will transform individuals and the denomination.

On the new AMBS mug is written, "You give me drink from the river of your delights" (Psalm 36:8). This is a campus where people take a full plunge into the river of worship, Bible study, theological reflection, and mission. Getting wet is a life-changing experience!

Inside

Graduates prepared for serving the church

Commencement

AMBS Panorama

January at AMBS

Graduates prepared for serving the church

Thirty-two students graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on May 23. Ten received the Master of Divinity; ten the Master of Arts in Peace Studies; eight the Master of Arts in Theological Studies and four the Certificate in Theological Studies.

Left to right: Rafael Barahona, Bonnie Bergie, Vicki Biggerstaff, Eric Buller

Rafael E. Barahona MATS in Christian Education. Will work as director of the Hispanic Ministries Department at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind. "My AMBS study experience has been fruitful. I thank God for faculty, staff and fellow students and I pray for God's continued guidance for all." Rafael is married to Pilar and they have two children. He is a member of El Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

Bonnie Bergey MAPS. Plans are in process. "AMBS has been a special place in which I have been able to integrate my previous experience with broader perspectives and theories." Bonnie is a member of Landstown Community Church, Virginia Beach, Va. Her stepfather is Frederick Keffer of Chesapeake, Va.

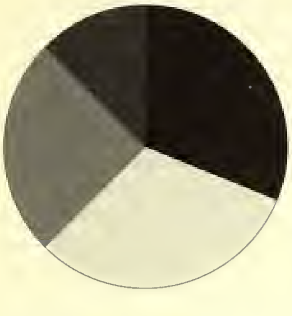
Vicki Biggerstaff MAPS. Plans in process. "I have been challenged to know God more fully, to think more deeply and to work more meaningfully for peace and justice." Vicki is a member of Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church, Sioux Falls, S.D. Her parents are Jim and Darlene Biggerstaff of Aberdeen, S.D.

Michael Bogard *Not pictured.* MDiv. Continue as youth minister for the Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church. "In a professional, diverse, and difficult world, it is critical that we be as prepared as we can be for ministry; this is AMBS's gift!" Michael is married to Marlene Harder Bogard and they have two children. He is a member of Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan. His parents are Orval and Paula Bogard, Carterville, Ill.

Eric Buller MDiv. Plans in process. "Seminary has been a place of healing for me. The diverse seminary community has given me an enriching experience that I will take with me." Eric is a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., and his parents are Harvey and Esther Buller of Mountain Lake.

Oscar Carvajal MATS in theology and ethics. Will complete a master of divinity degree in the next year. "At AMBS, we enjoyed an amazing multicultural family in the spirit of Jesus' route as suffering servant for God's eternal shalom to the nations." Oscar is married to Diana Marcela Carvajal and they have one child. He is a member of Comunidad De Fe, Chicago, Ill. His parents are Angel and Hermelina Carvajal of Santafe De Bogota, Colombia.

Betty Lou Collins MATS in theology and ethics. Preparing for theological leadership among Hispanic churches. "Studying with international students and workers has opened the Scriptures in fresh ways and given me a greater appreciation for the church around the world." Betty Lou is married to Ronald Collins and they have three adult children. She is a member of El Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.



Programs completed by 1997 graduates

■ Master of Divinity - 10

☐ Master of Arts in Peace Studies - 10

▨ Master of Arts in Theological Studies - 8

■ Certificate in Theological Studies - 4

Eric Roy Deckert MDiv. Pastor, Turpin (Okla.) Mennonite Church. "The Spirit is truly present at AMBS—it makes us aware of and confirms the life, vitality, and priority of God's saving purpose which are gifts from the very heart of God." Eric's parents are Roy and Shirley Deckert, Freeman, S.D. He has been a part of Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Mark Eastway MDiv. Will continue pastoring Asbury United Methodist Church in Albion, Ind. "The most meaningful result of my seminary education has been to grow in my knowledge of the scriptures and to improve my ministerial skills." He is married to Shelly Eastway and they have three children. His parents are Jack and JoAnn Eastway of Evart, Mich.

Allan Friesen *Not pictured.* MATS in Biblical Studies. Serving with Commission on Overseas Mission in Asuncion, Paraguay. Allan is married to Maryvel Friesen and they have two children. He is a member of Teifengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church, Laird, Sask. His parents are Wilmer and Ruth Friesen of Laird.

Craig E. Friesen MDiv. Search for pastoral position in process. "I've made new friends and experienced new things. I have greater awareness of God in my life and what God might work through my life." Craig is a member of Steinbach Mennonite Church, Steinbach, Man. His parents are Les and Lydia Friesen, Abbotsford, B.C.

Charge to Graduates

To you, *and to those whom you will lead, God has elected to entrust the future of Christ's church. I charge you tonight: Honor this trust.*

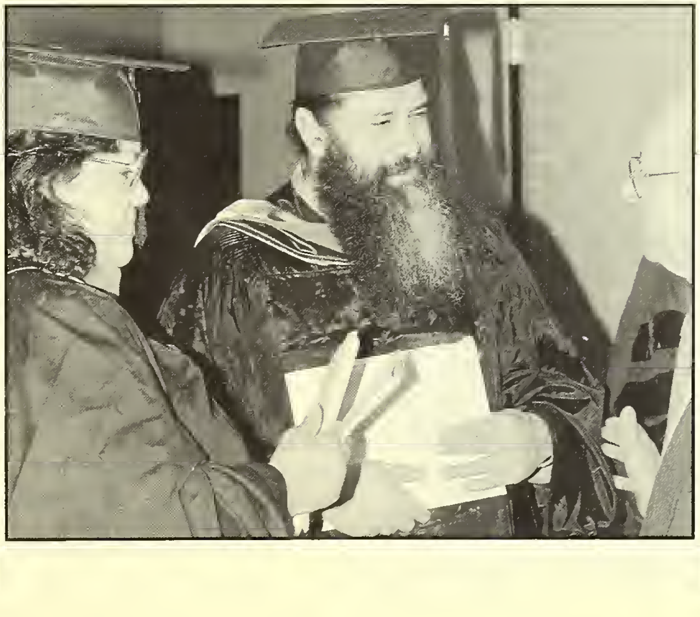
To you, *and to those whom you will lead, God has elected to entrust the witness of prophets and apostles, of saints and martyrs. I charge you tonight: Honor this trust.*

To you, *and to those whom you will lead, God has elected to entrust the heritage of countless thousands of men and women, across the ages, who poured their faith into works of mercy and words of praise. I charge you tonight: Honor this trust.*

To you, *God has elected to entrust the faith of those whom you will lead—of old women and old men who will pray for you, and of children whom you will teach how to pray. I charge you tonight: Honor this trust.*

Excerpt, Charge to graduates by Ben C. Ollenburger, Professor of Biblical Theology

Left to right: Oscar Carvajal, Betty Lou Collins, Eric Deckert, Mark Eastway, Craig Friesen



Zulma and Jimmer Prieto of Goshen, Ind., talk with Professor Emeritus Millard Lind following the commencement service. Both Zulma and Jimmer received the Master of Arts in Peace Studies degree in the May 23 service. They are originally from Colombia and hold degrees from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Al B. Fuertes MAPS. Will be part of the Silliman University community, Dumaguete City, Philippines, and do community organizing. "Being in a community of relationships where one feels the sense of belonging is one of the most meaningful experiences I had here at the seminary." Al is a member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Surigao City, Philippines. His mother is Librada B. Fuertes of Surigao City.

Stephen Helmken Certificate in Theological Studies. Planning to work in youth ministry. "AMBS has given me a better understanding of the importance of a strong faith and a willingness to share that faith with others." Stephen is a member of First United Methodist Church of Michigan City, Ind. He is the son of the late William and Daisy Helmken.

Neil Horsburgh Certificate in Theological Studies. Serving with Saralyn, his wife, as program coordinator of the Mennonite Central Committee Lancaster County Service Unit; future plans in process. "AMBS's supportive environment encouraged grappling with peace studies in an Anabaptist framework. Various subjects complemented each other to develop a more wholistic faith/life reality." Neil and Saralyn have three chidden. He is a member of Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa., and Box Hill Baptist Church, Victoria, Australia. He is the son of Melva Horsburgh of Warragul, Victoria, Australia.

Gordon Janzen MDiv. Pastor of Osler Mennonite Church, Osler, Sask. "I value the AMBS community which has provided an opportunity to reflect on previous ministry experiences and has challenged and nurtured my faith." He is married to Linda Enns and they have three children. He is a member of Trinity Mennonite Fellowship, Mather, Man. His parents are Gredi and Homer Janzen, Steinbach, Man.

Atsuhiro Katano MAPS. Will return to graduate study on international relations at Chuo University in Tokyo, Japan. "It has been meaningful for me to learn to raise questions which open the path to the intimate relationship with something other than myself." Hiro is a member of Honancho Mennonite Church, Tokyo. His parents are Nobuko and Takashi Katano, Obihiro, Hokkaido.

Esther Elaine Kauffman MDiv. Plans are in process. "Learning Greek and Hebrew has been both fun and challenging; encountering God in working on text layout and translation assignments has been most meaningful." Elaine is a member of Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell, Mont. and her parents are Paul and Esther Kauffman of Kalispell.

Margaret Kruger MATS in Theology and Ethics. Will return to teaching at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, Alb. "Learning about community while living within community has been an enriching experience. Spirituality is practiced in this context personally, with each other and with God." Margaret is a member of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary. Her parents are Bill and Helen Kruger of Osler, Sask.

H. Ricardo Liso MAPS. Will complete a Master of Divinity degree then return to Argentina to pastor and teach. "AMBS has enriched my life in many ways. Pluralism, simplicity, fellowship, unity are some of AMBS's contributions to my life. Thanks for your love. Shalom!" Ricardo is married to Virginia Liso and they have four children. Ricardo is a member of Iglesia Menonita "Comunidad Cristiana" in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His parents are Hector Miguel Liso and the late Josefina H.M. de Liso.

Randall C. Miller MATS in Christian Education. Plans in process. "Taking summer Greek was my only experience as a full-time on-campus student and will always be one of the highlights of my life." Randall is married to Marsha Hooley and is the son of Wayne and Mildred Miller, St. Lawrence, S.D. He is a member of First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, Ind.

Left to right: Al Fuertes, Stephen Helmken, Neil Horsburgh, Gordon Janzen

"Fall in love all over again," graduates told

One-fourth of the graduating class of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary came from outside North America, and the commencement service on May 23 at College Mennonite Church reflected this international flavor.

Thirty-two students participated in the service, twenty-eight receiving degrees and four receiving certificates. Among these 32, eight were from the countries of Argentina, Japan, Colombia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Australia.

Five of the graduates speak Spanish as their first language, so they helped to lead the final hymn in Spanish, "Tú has venido a la orilla" (Lord, you have come to the lakeshore). In addition, an ensemble of AMBS students sang two African songs in the service, one in Chitonga and one in Zulu.

"I invite you to return to a time and place only you know, to the time when you first walked out of the shadows and into the light," Wilma Ann Bailey, commencement speaker, told the graduates. The associate professor of biblical studies at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., said, "Most of us were brought here by our love of the Bible, the church and God." She concluded by saying, "I invite you to fall in love again with God, with the church and with the Scriptures."

Left to right: Hiro Katano, Elaine Kauffman, Margaret Kruger, Ricardo Liso, Randall Miller

Commencement speaker Wilma Ann Bailey is herself a graduate of AMBS. She received a Master of Divinity degree in 1979. She now is associate professor of biblical studies and religion at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

Lois Hess Nafziger MAPS. Plans in process. "It has been a time to nurture and challenge my inner self and reflect on direction for the next part of my peacemaking journey." Lois is married to John D. Nafziger and they have three children. She is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Her parents are Jacob and Mary Hess of Millersville, Pa.

Patrick Preheim MDiv. Will co-pastor Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, Minn., with Patty Friesen, his wife. "Seminary has been a time of faith development. I have learned about my relationship with God through studies, internships, spiritual disciplines and conversations." Patrick has been a member of Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb. His parents are Ron and Lois Preheim of Henderson.

Left to right: Lois Nafziger, Patrick Preheim, Jimmer Prieto, Zulma Prieto

Jimmer Prieto MAPS. Plans in process; hopes to teach at the college level. "Life for Hispanics in Goshen is not unlike that of historical Egyptian Jews. AMBS enriched my understanding of these types of peace and justice issues." Jimmer is married to Zulma Ramos Prieto and they have two children. They are members of Communion Fellowship, Goshen, Ind. His parents are Ignacio and Paulina Prieto of Bogota, Colombia.

Zulma Ramos Prieto MAPS. Will serve as executive director of Casa de Amistad, South Bend, Ind., and as editor of the newspaper, *El Puente*. "It was important to be in the midst of such knowledgeable people. Many times I tried to relate the theory to the local issues." Zulma is married to Jimmer Prieto and they have two children. She is a member of Communion Fellowship, Goshen, Ind. Her parents are Fernando and Dora Ramos, Bogota, Colombia.

William Reimer MAPS. Will work with Mennonite Central Committee. "The opportunity to study peace issues from a biblical perspective has been most meaningful. This will provide a basis for future work in the area of peace, relief and development." William is married to Ingrid von Kampen and they have three children. He is a member of River East Mennonite Brethren Church, Winnipeg, Man. His parents are George and Olga Reimer of Winnipeg.

Timothy J. Schultz *Not pictured.* Certificate in Theological Studies. Will continue as pastor of Norma (N.J.) Mennonite Church. "AMBS offered not only high quality learning opportunities but also personal interaction with a faculty and staff whose lives reflect the Lord Jesus Christ." His mother is Carol Schultz of Clarence, N.Y.

Mike Sherrill MDiv. Will enter ThM inter-cultural studies program at Fuller Theological Seminary; next year he and Teresa, his wife, plan to serve with Commission on Overseas Mission in Japan. "In the midst of a chaotic world God is present. This is the unfailing source of sustaining strength for a mission of peace and redemption." Mike and Teresa have a newborn son, Isaiah. Mike is a member of Upper Milford Mennonite Church, Zionsville. Pa.

John K. Stoner *Not pictured.* MDiv. Will continue in vocation of peacemaking. "At AMBS I have appreciated the warm spirit and intellectual vigor of teachers and students in the Anabaptist tradition. John is married to Janet Hoover Stoner and they have three children. He is a member of Akron Mennonite Church. John previously received a B.D. degree from AMBS and with further study has qualified for the MDiv.

Eight countries represented

Canada	5
United States	21
Colombia	3
Argentina	1
Australia	1
Indonesia	1
Japan	1
Philippines	1

Kent D. Stucky MATS in theology and ethics. Will continue as vice president for institutional advancement at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind. "I am grateful to my employers—Mennonite Mutual Aid, Mennonite Central Committee and Goshen College—for encouraging study at AMBS during the past twelve years." Kent is married to Linda Stucky and they have two children. He is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

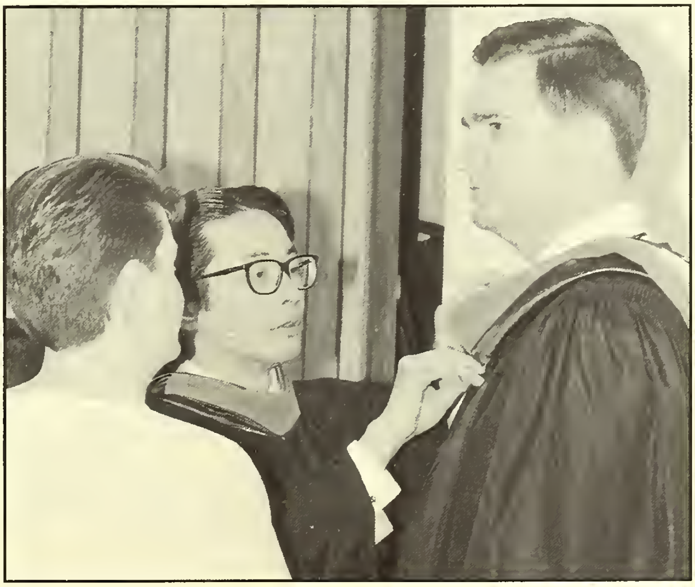
Erin Hui-Lun Wen *Not pictured.* Certificate in Theological Studies. Plans in process. "Seminary experiences enrich my spirituality and biblical and theological knowledge. I really enjoy it!" Erin is a member of Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan. Her parents are Hung-Chi and Huang-Shih Wen, Topeka.

Paulus Sugeng Widjaja MAPS. Will enter doctoral study in ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif. "My awareness and knowledge of peace and justice as well as my commitment in Christian faith have been deeply enhanced through my study at AMBS." He is married to Janti Diredja Widjaja and they have two children. His home congregation is Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI). His parents are Samuel P. and Esther T. Widjaja of Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia.

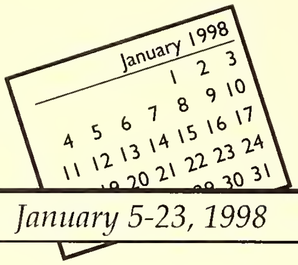
Ilse H. Yoder MATS in Christian Spirituality. Continue serving as spiritual mentor to Goshen College students through Campus Ministries. "Answering God's call to study, I have been able through the years to put much of the learnings to use already within the congregational setting." Ilse is married to Larry R. Yoder and they have two adult children. Yoder is a member of East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Left to right: William Reimer, Mike Sherrill, Kent Stucky, Paulus Widjaja, Ilse Yoder

Anyone putting on a masters' hood for the first time can use a little help. Graduate Mark Eastway gets help from Hiro Katano while Shelly, Mark's wife, observes.



January at AMBS



Interterm 1998 *January 5-23, 1998*

Congregational Spirituality
Marlene Kropf. AMBS
Christian Encounter with World Religions
Arthur McPhee, AMBS
Hymnology
Mary K. Oyer, AMBS
The Corinthian Correspondence
Jacob Elias, AMBS
Biblical Interpretation in Latin American Perspective
Mario Higueros, Dean, SEMILLA (Latin-American Anabaptist Seminary, Guatemala)
Course taught in Guatemala
Christianity and Culture
Duane K. Friesen, Bethel College, N. Newton, Kan.
Revisioning Youth Ministry
Abe Bergen, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man.

For more information, contact Andrew Kreider, admissions

Weekend Conference *January 16-17, 1998*

Youth and Family Ministry into the 21st Century

Presenter: Roland D. Martinson, profssor of pastoral care and counseling, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

Continuing Education event for people interested in ministry to youth and families; also included in course, Revisioning Youth Ministry.

For more information, contact the Dean's office

Pastors' Week *January 26-29, 1998*

Invitation and Belonging:
Congregational Rituals and Rhythms

Bible teacher: J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president
Worship/input team members: Keith Harder, Hillsboro, Kan.; Marlene Kropf, AMBS; Rebecca Slough, Richmond, Ind.

For more information, contact Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Pastors' Week coordinator

Leadership Clinics *January 30, 1998*

Enhancing Bible Study with Computer
Perry B. Yoder, AMBS
Assimilating New Members
Janeen Bertsche Johnson, AMBS

For more information, contact Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Pastors' Week coordinator

AMBS Panorama

Bible course on-line

Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament , and **Perry Yoder,** professor of Old Testament, have revised the AMBS entry-level Bible course, "Reading the Bible," to offer it on-line beginning in September. This course may be of special interest to Christian Education teachers who seek a deeper understanding of the Bible and for people who wish to take an introductory seminary course. For information, contact the AMBS registrar at 219 296-6268 or registrar@ambs.edu.

Faculty and staff honored

In May, two AMBS staff members were honored as they leave: **Ralph Lebold,** director of external programs, is leaving AMBS for health reasons, and **Joe Hertzler,** director of development, is retiring after 26 years.

At the same event **Mary K. Oyer,** professor of church music at AMBS, was honored for 50 years of teaching at several Mennonite institutions. Willard Swartley, AMBS dean, presented Mary with several small gifts, saying, "You have served the church for 50 years and we have been blessed that a small fraction of this was at AMBS."

On April 24-25, 1998, AMBS will host a Hymn Festival also to honor Mary. The weekend will reflect the variety of hymns important in Mennonite churches and will feature musicians from across North America and beyond.

Gifts large and small

"Many gifts large and small got us to a balanced budget three days before the end of the fiscal year," Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, says with gratitude. AMBS ended the year on June 30 with a small surplus to start the new year, according to preaudited figures.

"Because tuition covers only one-fourth of our costs, we rely on the generosity of friends near and far," Nelson explains. "This is a vote of confidence and a measure of support that people across the church give to AMBS. Many individuals and congregations make it a priority to be partners with AMBS in the task of preparing leaders for the future of the church."

Faculty receive grants

Mary Schertz, associate professor of New Testament, and **Perry Yoder,** professor of Old Testament, have received a grant from the Association of Theological Schools to work on a project to produce interactive Hebrew and Greek computer modules for the first level language courses.

Daniel Schipani, professor of Christian education and personality, received a grant from the Mennonite Board of Education Peoplehood Education Fund to help publish papers from the Mennonite World Conference event, "Theological Education on Five Continents."

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

Editor and designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos: Page 1 - J. Tyler Klassen;
Graduate groups - Steve Echols;
Pages 3, 5, 7 - Mary E. Klassen;
Page 8 - Gordon Janzen

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Biblical
Seminary

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News

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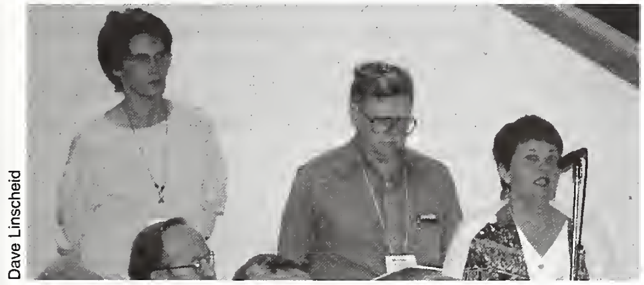
GC delegates agree to accept new name

Winnipeg—The General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), in what may be its last separate delegate sessions, has agreed to a new name. Once it integrates with the Mennonite Church (MC), the new denomination will likely be called "Mennonite Church."

Meeting here July 6-8 in special sessions, delegates voted on three proposals regarding integration with the MC. The first proposal, which passed with 76 percent of the vote, was on the name. But it did not pass without discussion.

Many spoke against the name because "it sounds arrogant." Herb Fretz, Goshen, Ind., said it is too generic. Robert Hartzler, Freeman, S.D., said it says too much and too little. He proposed the name Mennonite Church General Conference. Mike Smith, Bluffton, Ohio, didn't like the name but couldn't come up with an alternative. Bob Gerhart, Bally, Pa., said the name is a use of power over smaller groups. He proposed the name Mennonite Church United Conference. David Habegger, Fort Wayne, Ind., wanted "North America" in brackets.


Dave Linscheid

Much discussion: *Delegates line up at the microphone.*

Others disagreed. Ruth Martin, New Hamburg, Ont., asked if we're telling MC people they've been arrogant. Char Smith, Bluffton, Ohio, said she's proud of the name Mennonite. Jake Klassen, Coaldale, Alta., said the name is concise and inclusive. Steve Estes, Flanagan, Ill., said our attitude in using the name is important.

The other two proposals brought by the Integration Committee (IC) on behalf of the MC and GC general boards were (1) that delegates meeting in 1999 in St. Louis receive a plan for the two General Boards and the two delegate bodies to join sometime thereafter and (2) that *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald* become one publication in early 1998 (see box page 14).

These each passed with around 96 percent of the vote, though not without some disagreement, particularly regarding the new magazine.

Marvin Zehr, Newton, Kan., said he is uncomfortable with a U.S. identity for the periodical if it carries the name *The Mennonite.* Gordon Epp-Fransen, Winnipeg, wanted it governed by a U.S. entity. Terry Zimmerly, Regina, Sask., said he is uncomfortable with having two periodicals. (The proposal includes affirmation for a Canadian periodical, called *Canadian Mennonite,* as a denominational magazine as well.) "At least there should be shared content," he said.

The IC also solicited counsel on four areas of organizing the new denomination: (1) assemblies, (2) General Board membership, (3) program boards and (4) a regional model.

Delegates: Most responses dealt with representation at the assemblies. In the GC, congregations appoint delegates; in the MC, area conferences appoint significantly fewer delegates. The IC is recommending a compromise in which conferences appoint delegates, though many more than at present.

This wasn't good enough for some. Darrell Ediger, Kidron, Ohio, asked that representation be one delegate for every 100 members or fraction thereof. John Zook, Portland, Ore., said every congregation should be able to send a delegate. June Thomsen, Pandora, Ohio, wanted to make sure more youth delegates come. Susanna Barrett, 18, Wichita, Kan., said that their small church, also an MC member, has never had a member named as a delegate to the Mennonite Church Assembly.

Delegates also passed resolutions on congregational youth ministry, violence and global mission. The youth statement, heartily affirmed by dele-

Inside the news

Residents answer INS raids with prayer / p. 15

Visionary sees worldwide Anabaptist network / p. 16

Gala benefit concert aids artists / p. 18

PNMC focuses on mission, giving / p. 19

Mennonite Women is the new name for the integrated women's organization of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church.

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The Mennonite Environmental Task Force is sponsoring a design contest open to Mennonites of all ages. "We're looking for one or more designs that would work well as a [task force] logo, a T-shirt transfer or a poster," says Doug Krehbiel, Commission on Home Ministries staffperson who works with the task force. The task force is jointly supported by CHM of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries of the Mennonite Church. The theme for artists and designers is "Vision: Healing and Hope for God's Creation." All formats are welcome, including ink, charcoal, watercolors and computer art. The winning design or designs will be published in *The Mennonite, Mennonite Weekly Review, Mennonite Reporter, Gospel Herald* and the children's magazine *On the Line* and posted on the task force's web site, as well as used to identify and publicize future work. All entries must be received by Sept. 30 and will become the property of the Environmental Task Force. Entries will be evaluated by the task force at its fall meeting. Send entries to Mennonite Environmental Task Force, c/o Doug Krehbiel, Director of Peace and Justice Resources, 722 Main St., P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114- 0347. For more information call Krehbiel at (316) 283-5100 or e-mail dougk@ gcmc.org.

Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., sponsored a production on "holy women" Reliah and Rahab in Gallery 7's production of *Lifeline* on May 3. The drama was a modern retelling of the story of Rahab and the fall of Jericho. It drew parallels between the idolatry of Canaanite culture and the idolatry of our culture, such as using sex in advertising, devaluing human life, and hero worship. John Trottier (who has appeared in television's *X-Files*) directed the production. (*Brayden Sawatzky, Mennonite Reporter*)

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Four churches joined the General Conference Mennonite Church at GC delegate sessions held in Winnipeg July 6-8. They are North Suburban Mennonite Church, Mundelein, Ill., also affiliated with Central District Conference (GC) and Illinois Conference of the Mennonite Church (MC); Family of Faith Mennonite Church, Rio Rancho, N.M., also affiliated with Rocky Mountain Conference (MC); Emmanuel Mennonite Church, St. Paul, Minn., also affiliated with Northern District Conference (GC) and Iowa-Nebraska Conference (MC), and Living Hope Christian Fellowship, Surrey, B.C., also affiliated with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

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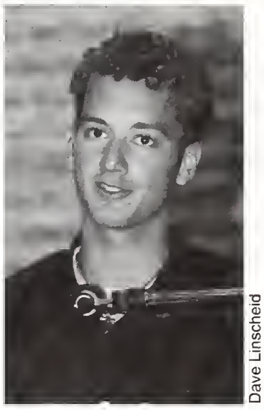
Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Historical Society and Lancaster County Historical Society are sponsoring a Family History Conference Oct. 30-Nov. 1 in Lancaster. Keynote speaker is Arlene H. Eakle, professional genealogist from Salt Lake City. The event will feature workshops, research tours to Washington and Chester County, and individual research consultations. For information contact Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602-1499; (717) 393-9745.

gates, called the church to "invite all youth to be an integral part of congregational life."

The statement on violence, which will be presented to the MC at its biennial assembly in Orlando in late July, elicited much discussion.

Several disagreed strongly with a line that names "violence against self as sin." While it may be true, said Albert Durksen, Winnipeg, "it's not particularly helpful." John Keimz, Portland, Ore., asked how violence can always be wrong if the Bible says God does it.

Others liked it. Mathew Swora, McPherson, Kan., felt it covered the theological spectrum and was inclusive. "We need to name and unmask the false god of violence," he said. And Russell Welty, Atlanta, added that if we pass such a statement yet do nothing about it when we get home, it is worthless.



Five years of voluntary service in a few days: *Micah Thieszen*

Eventually, delegates agreed to pass the statement "in principle, with editorial revision to come later."

Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference brought a resolution on global mission that it had passed in June. Among other things, it proposes that "the [GC] invites congregations and area conferences to identify similar global mission opportunities and commends this model of partnerships as a way to offer God's healing and hope to a world in pain and doubt."

Youth: More than 600 GC youth and sponsors held their own sessions and joined the adults one evening for worship. Youth worked on numerous service projects, many helping with cleanup from the devastating May floods in the area. Micah Thieszen, Henderson, Neb., reported that the youth provided an equivalent of five years of voluntary service in those few days.

Toward the end of the sessions, Tim Paetkau, Edmonton, Alta., said he is a gay man not welcomed in the host facility because of Immanuel Pentecostal Church's refusal to allow gay and lesbian church members or their supporters to meet on its premises. He counseled future program committees and the General Board to allow all members of the body of Christ to attend conferences.

The sessions included worship and Bible study "insights" on the theme "Transformed in Christ."

The 732 registrants included 516 delegates from 176 congregations.
Gordon Houser

Peachey to edit new magazine

Winnipeg—J. Lorne Peachey, Scottdale, Pa., has been named editor of a new periodical for the integrated Mennonite church. To be called *The Mennonite*, the first issue of the new periodical is scheduled for February 1998.

Peachey's appointment was part of several recommendations from a Periodicals Integration Committee working on the merger of *Gospel Herald* of the Mennonite Church (MC) and of *The Mennonite*, currently published by the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC).

The recommendations, approved by GC delegates (see story, page 13), are also scheduled for action by MC General Assembly delegates at Orlando, Fla., later this month.

Plans call for two editorial offices—one in Newton, Kan., where *The Mennonite* is published, and the other in Scottdale, Pa., site of the *Gospel Herald* offices. For the first year the new publication will be printed at Scottdale by Mennonite Publishing House.

Until complete integration of MC and GC structures takes place, the magazine will be under the direction of an Interim Periodical Board, made up of three representatives from each group.

The publication is to be fully funded by subscriptions and advertising. The new publication will also work closely with the *Canadian Mennonite*, a new publication of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada scheduled to begin in September.

Residents answer INS raids with prayer

Goshen, Ind. (CPT)—Recent raids on factories in Elkhart County by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) prompted some residents to respond with public prayer.

Forty-five people gathered June 14 outside the Elkhart County Building at 7 a.m. to express their desire for harmonious relations between the Anglo and Hispanic communities in Elkhart County. Members of the local Hispanic community had invited northern Indiana members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) to plan a public response following INS raids of seven Elkhart factories on June 11.

Oscar and Juanita Ramos, pastors at La Sagrada Familia United Methodist Church, Goshen, along with Art Smoker, pastor at North Goshen Mennonite Church, and Sylvia Shirk Charles, Goshen College campus pastor, planned and led the bilingual (Spanish and English) service.

Shirk Charles and Juanita Ramos welcomed the worshipers with words from Leviticus 19:34: "The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself."

Oscar Ramos and Smoker gave brief meditations on Ezekiel 17:22-24, where God promises to plant a twig that will grow into a noble cedar, under which "every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind."

The worship service preceded a meeting of the Elkhart County Council at 8 a.m. On the council's agenda was a resolution to refuse county funds to any agency that assists undocumented immigrants. Many of the worshipers stayed for the council meeting and spoke to the resolution.

Rich Meyer, Millersburg, Ind., said the resolution ignored the important contributions immigrants make to the county. Nancy Frey, Elkhart, pointed out that the nonbinding resolution is not a law and does not have any weight. "It is important to examine the spirit of the resolution," she said.

Several council members agreed. Council member John Leatherman reported that according to business owners the Hispanic workers are their best workers. "This resolution only divides people," he said.

After lengthy discussion, the resolution was tabled. Council member Frank Algate, who opposed the resolution, said it would have been defeated had a vote been held.

In the course of the raids earlier in the week, the INS eventually held and scheduled for deportation 81 people found without legal documents. In response, northern Indiana members of CPT held a one-hour public vigil at noon outside the county courthouse in Goshen.

"I'm concerned about deporting hardworking taxpayers and the fact that it is so hard for people who want to work to get a visa and come here legally," said Shirk Charles, who took part in the vigil.

Elkhart County CPTers say that they will hold similar vigils outside the courthouse the day after any future INS raids in the county.

CPT in Northern Indiana members are Shirk Charles, Frey, Meyer, Kathy Kamphoefner and Cliff Kindy (North Manchester), Lois Nafziger and Janet Shoemaker (Goshen), and Bruce Yoder (Elkhart).

A twig into a cedar: *Ed Nyce, Elkhart, Ind., accepts a branch from Juanita Ramos, pastor with her husband, Oscar, at La Sagrada Familia United Methodist Church in Goshen, Ind. The branch is a symbol of God's saving power as found in Ezekiel 17:22-24. Nyce and Ramos were taking part in a June 14 public worship service in Goshen calling for harmonious relationships between the Anglo and Hispanic communities in Elkhart County, following raids by the Immigration and Naturalization Service on seven county factories.*

The Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College Chorale raised $4,770 Cdn. on its annual fund-raising tour, but instead of using the money for school projects, students are giving it to Mennonite Disaster Service for relief work in southern Manitoba. Students from Rosthern and from Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Man., have also joined MDS volunteers and helped with some of the relief effort. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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"Revs on Ice" is a hockey team of 19 pastors and priests from 16 congregations in 11 denominations in the Tavistock, Ont., area. They made their debut at a March 20 fund-raising game playing against local farmers, reports the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*. Almost $1,500 Cdn. was raised for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Although the "revs" lost this game, they hope to play in other fund-raising matches next year. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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The Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary board of directors met May 29-31 in Elkhart, Ind. Eileen Saner was appointed a member of the AMBS administrative cabinet. Floyd Bartel was appointed director of the Conference-Based Theological Education program of the Great Plains Seminary Education Program, sponsored by South Central and Western District conferences, beginning July 1. He replaces Jacob T. Friesen, who is retiring. The board affirmed revisions in the plan of study for students in the pastoral care and counseling concentration of the Master of Divinity program. It will now include two options: one on congregational pastoral care and chaplaincy, the other on preparation for clinical certification. In other business, the board noted that contributions were behind what was needed for the fiscal year ending June 30. The board approved implementating the fourth step of a five-step salary adjustment plan to bring faculty salaries in line with salaries of pastors in larger Mennonite congregations. (*Mary E. Klassen*)

"Imagine forgiving the man who took your father's life," said Wichita, Kan., television anchor Susan Peters. "Today [Kristi Smith] did just that." Smith and Billy Lemons, the man who killed her father, had participated in a victim-offender program at the Hutchinson (Kan.) Correctional Facility. On hearing of Lemons' impending release from prison, Smith wanted to meet him at the prison gate. She wanted to share the message that not every victim of crime wants revenge or hates the offender. "Being able to forgive you is one of the most dramatic things that has happened in my entire life," Smith told Lemons on March 7. "It has changed my heart." (*OVM Newsletter*)

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According to Mennonite Central Committee, while Canada officially endorsed the United Nations declaration of 1996 as the "International Year for the Eradication of Poverty," trends in Canada seemed to increase poverty rather than eradicate it. The National Anti-Poverty Organization cites an international study that classifies 15.4 percent of Canadian families as poor, the third-worst rating (behind the United States at 18.4 percent and Australia at 15.7 percent) among nine industrialized nations. The percentage of the national income going to the richest 20 percent of Canadian households is nearly twice as high as that shared by the bottom 50 percent. Representatives of Canada's mainline churches have strongly criticized the government's economic policies. They say an estimated 5 million Canadians are living in poverty, 1.5 million of them children, which gives Canada the second highest child poverty rate, behind the United States, in the developed world. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald, Gospel Herald*)

Rich expression

J. Daryl Byler (MCC)

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Rebecca Rich, 18, of Archbold, Ohio, was honored June 6 at a luncheon attended by United Nations dignitaries in Washington. Rich's essay, "The United Nations and the Elimination of Landmines," placed first among 174 entries from high school students across the United States. The theme of this year's contest—sponsored by the U.N. Association of the United States—was the United Nations' efforts to ban landmines.

Rich visited Laos with her father, Mennonite Central Committee chair Phil Rich, and other MCC supporters in spring 1995. In her essay she told about meeting an elderly woman in the village of Lath Gnown who had lost a son and—17 years later, in 1994—a grandson in cluster bomb accidents.

Rich's essay passed through its own minefield of expertise in international relations on its way to first place. Among the judges were former U.S. ambassadors to Ireland and Niger; U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, and William Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Leahy, a strong supporter of a worldwide landmine ban, introduced stronger landmine legislation in the Senate the following week. At the awards ceremony, he quoted a Cambodian man who told him, "We clear our landmines an arm and a leg at a time."

After receiving a certificate and $1,000 check from Alvin P. Adams, former U.S. ambassador to Haiti and current president of the United Nations Association (pictured at right, with Roy D. Morey, director of the U.N. Development Programe, at left), Rich spoke for five minutes. She told how her community in Archbold has adopted a Laotian village to help clear unexploded bombies.
Emily Will

Visionary sees worldwide Anabaptist network

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Perhaps because of his own strong faith, the persecution he has experienced and the outpouring of Christian love he has received from Mennonites worldwide when he needed it, Colombian Mennonite Ricardo Esquivia has a vision.

He would like to see a loose confederation of Anabaptist congregations around the world who exchange Christian love, knowledge and faith across cultural and linguistic boundaries—advocating for one another and sharing one another's pain and difficulties.

The recent Mennonite World Conference assembly in Calcutta officially endorsed Esquivia's idea. But now the idea needs wings.

As director of Justapaz, a Mennonite peace organization in Colombia, Esquivia is ready to help get the network flying. So is Maarten van der Werf, staffperson for the European Mennonite Peace Committee, who is working part-time on it from Zwolle, Netherlands. As a first step, Esquivia and van der Werf are sending the idea into circulation.

Ricardo Esquivia

One small exchange that has already taken place between Justapaz and South Christian Street Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa., serves as an example. The two groups traded stories, photos and letters.

A challenge both groups face that brings them together is violence in their society and neighborhoods.

Maurice, an 11-year-old from the Lancaster church, told how he nonviolently confronted—and ended up becoming friends with—a student who had been bullying him. Juan, a fourth-grader in a small Mennonite school in Colombia, shared with the Lancaster church how he put his mediation training (received through Justapaz) to work in his own family. Juan's mother and father were constantly fighting. Juan, then 10, sat them down and led them through a mediation session. With Juan's guidance, his parents talked together for three hours.

The idea behind the network, says Esquivia, is to nurture such seeds, wherever they are. He hopes Mennonites worldwide can envision the tree within the seed and "taste" and "smell" its delicious fruit.

Relationships such as the one between Justapaz and South Christian Street church are just little shoots that need nurturing, he says. Their mutual exchange breaks feelings of isolation and opens minds to the existence of the larger worldwide church.

Esquivia hopes the network will be firmly rooted in Christian worship and prayer and will branch out to deal with the daily challenges to Anabaptists in all kinds of settings. Four major challenges he sees the network dealing with are violence, unemployment, racial and ethnic harmony and international economic relationships.

What are some practical possibilities? Esquivia is full of ideas. Deforested land can be purchased for $10 U.S. per hectare (about 2.5 acres) in Colombia. Churches in the North could buy some land and, with the help of local Christians, convert it into a healthy ecological system that also produces income, such as butterfly farms or silkworm raising.

But the network is not just about advocacy or economics, Esquivia emphasizes. It is first and foremost a spiritual network.

"God hears us through our feelings, not through whatever language we speak. And God's language is love," he says.

"The key is to transcend the physical distance separating us by using God's language, the language of love. That is why the network is, above all, a prayer network to link Christians through the work of the Holy Spirit."

Congregations are invited to register as part of the Anabaptist Peace and Justice Network. To do so, contact Judy Zimmerman Herr, co-director of the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office, at MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151; fax (717) 859-2171; e-mail jzh@ mcc.org. Include the names of the national church or conference, the local congregation and the contact person, along with an address and, if available, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. *Emily Will*

Frank Albrecht

Wings: *Colombian Mennonite Lina Maria Obando, second from right, talks with schoolgirls during mediation training in Cachipay, Colombia. Such trainings are sponsored by Justapaz, a peace organization of the Colombia Mennonite Church, directed by Ricardo Esquivia.*

"We're all learning" is the theme for the 1997-98 children's project packet available from the General Conference Mennonite Church. Projects are focused around Spanish-speaking congregations in North America and two Mennonite schools in Colombia, where the churches are celebrating 50 years of Mennonite ministry this year. To order a free project packet, write Children's Packet, General Conference Mennonite Church, 722 Main St., P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114-0347; e-mail jo@gcmc.org.

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A federal magistrate ruled Jan. 28 that shackling Alabama inmates to an iron bar as a form of discipline should be abolished because it violates the U.S. Constitution's ban on cruel and inhuman treatment. No equivalent to the "hitching post" exists elsewhere in the nation. Prisoners have been handcuffed to the bar for as long as nine hours, under broiling sun and in cold rain, without water or shelter. (*SPLC Report*)

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Last September the Pentagon declassified seven Spanish-language manuals used to train Latin American military personnel at the School of the Americas and by U.S. military "mobile training teams." (See the article on page 10.) In the curriculum are passages on torture, execution, blackmail, false imprisonment and other human rights violations. U.S. Representative Joe Kennedy has again introduced legislation to close the School of the Americas; Senator Dick Durbin plans to introduce it in the Senate. For more information on the School of the Americas, contact the Friends Committee on National Legislation, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002; e-mail fcnl@igc.apc.org; ask for document G-776-MIL. (*FCNL Newsletter*)

"Art in the Everyday" is the theme for the Mennonite Arts Weekend in Cincinnati Feb. 6-8, 1998. The weekend will include comedy by Ted and Lee, readings and discussions, exhibits, choral works, a coffeehouse and more. The weekend is a forum, both educational and celebrative, for anyone interested in the arts. For information on the event, call Hal Hess at (513) 351-8785.

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Mennonite Association for Retired Persons, Mennonite Mutual Aid and Goshen (Ind.) College are sponsoring the Mennonite Senior Sports Classic, to be held June 24-27, 1998, at the college. The MSSC is open to all individuals who will be 50 or older by June 27, 1998. Events will include basketball, bowling, cycling, golf, horseshoes, race-walking, racquetball, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, tennis and track and field. For more information, write MARP, Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245.

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Daryl Johnson, a teacher at Northeastern University, Shenyang, China, with China Educational Exchange, received two "model teacher" awards recently, from the city of Shenyang and the province of Liaoning. The awards were based on evaluations by Johnson's students as well as the foreign language department and the Foreign Affairs Office of Northeastern University, where he is serving a two-year assignment as an English teacher. The provincial award, called the Gardener Award, is "from a Chinese metaphor that says a teacher is like a gardener [who] cultivates and helps the students grow," says Johnson. "I don't think I did anything special or above the call of duty to win [these awards]," he says. "I just show up for class and do what I'm called to do by God, serve. Teaching is my ministry here, but ... the part I'm here for is relationship building. The outside-of-class activities and student visitations [are] what I enjoy the most."

Gala benefit concert aids artists

Lancaster, Pa. (EMM)—Few of the more than 500 concertgoers thought twice about paying $20 a ticket to listen to Italian and German lyrics they would never understand unless they read the English translation in the program booklet.

They knew that 100 percent of the ticket sales went to help musicians and artists from the former Soviet Union attend a Christian artists' gathering in Lithuania this summer.

Dale D. Gehman

Artists' vision: *Still dressed in their street clothes, from left, Sergei Forostianii, Myra Merritt, Madeline Bender and Timothy Bentch warm up before giving a concert in Lancaster, Pa. The gala benefit raised funds for artists and musicians from the former Soviet Union to attend a Christian artists' gathering this summer in Lithuania.*

The gala benefit concert, held June 15 at Lancaster Mennonite High School, featured Russian pianist Sergei Forostianii, soprano Myra Merritt of the Metropolitan Opera, soprano Madeline Bender, tenor Timothy Bentch and The Song for the Nations Choir, performing a variety of classical and American spiritual pieces.

The artists' gathering, to be held at Lithuania Christian College in Klaipeda, is sponsored by A Song for the Nations (SFN) ministry, as was the benefit concert.

SFN is an associate ministry of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Its directors, Timothy and Lorri Bentch, are mission associates with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

SFN sends professional artists and musicians (Timothy Bentch, for example, is an operatic tenor) to live in former communist countries in central and eastern Europe and to be Christian witnesses as they work in their professions.

The Bentches got the vision for gathering together Christian artists from Russia during a visit to Moscow and Saint Petersburg in February 1996. They saw that many artists and musicians in the former Soviet Union struggle to find their place in the church and their identity as artists.

Under Communist rule, the artists faced constant discrimination. Now, after finding political freedom, many are still seeking the personal freedom to be both Christian and an artist.

"We want to encourage them to continue working in secular fields as they live out their faith," Lorri Bentch says.

SFN hopes that close to 100 artists will converge in Lithuania in mid-August for a week filled with lectures, informal discussion, workshops, an exhibition by visual artists and a concert.

The SFN benefit concert in the United States was necessary, says Lorri Bentch, since most Russians are not able to pay the full costs for their participation. "The participants will pay their own travel and registration [costs], but the concert raised the bulk of the funds to pay for the event," she says.

Corporate sponsors paid the Lancaster concert expenses so that all money from ticket sales will go directly to assist the Russian artists. The average income in Russia is about $169 U.S. per month.

Timothy Bentch and SFN board member Esther Augsburger, Washington, have been working closely with a team of Russian artists to plan the gathering.

"Our hope is that this gathering will help artists understand how they can best serve God with the talents they have been given. Rather than seeking an exodus from the world, we hope they will endeavor to become the very best in their professions and seek to give glory to their Creator in all they do," Timothy Bentch says.

Concertgoers in Lancaster got a small taste of that Russian talent by watching and listening to pianist Forostianii. Born in Moldova, he is now resident soloist with the Saint Petersburg Youth Orchestra. Except for a performance the night before at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts in Lancaster, this was his first appearance in the United States. *Carol L. Wert*

PNMC focuses on mission, giving

Aurora, Ore. —Mission and stewardship focused the activity of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC), meeting here June 19-22 at Calvary Mennonite Church.

Delegates adopted a new conference mission statement that has been developed over the past year.

The annual meeting had the theme "Empowered to be Stewards." Highlights of the weekend included worship services with messages by conference minister Larry Hauder and by Mark Vincent of The Giving Project, an opening meal of homemade tamales by members of PNMC's Concilio de Iglesias Hispanas Anabautistas, and storytelling by committee chairs.

One key area of discussion during the business sessions concerned the development of a job description for PNMC missions minister, a position held by John Miller for the past three years. Miller has worked closely with Spanish-speaking congregations that relate to PNMC and also served half-time as nonresident missionary to Mennonites in northwest Mexico.

"We have the most exciting scene in North America in terms of church growth," said Jeanne Zook, chair of the evangelism and missions committee.

She introduced an Ethiopian missionary couple, Sisay Desalegen and Yodit Alemu, who are reaching out to Ethiopians, Eritreans and Somalis in Seattle. Outgoing PNMC secretary Kathy Bilderback described an emerging fellowship in Meridian, Idaho. And Victor Vargas of Iglesia Menonita Pentecostes spoke about Comunidad Cristiana Nueva Vida, the growing Hispanic church in Keizer, Ore.

Concern for the challenges and discrimination faced by Hispanics was a recurring theme throughout the weekend. In the open mike session, Ramiro Hernandez, co-pastor at Calvary Mennonite Church, said that Spanish-speaking congregations will be hurt by anti-immigration laws, and urged PNMC to "stand as a church with us" through prayer and other ways.

Jeff Hackman, outgoing chair of the peace and justice committee, presented the first annual PNMC "peace mug" to long-time peace activist Lois Kenagy of Albany, Ore.

Delegates passed a budget of $249,000 for 1997-98, about $19,000 over last year. *Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

Who goes there?

CHIAPAS JAI!
PEACE FUND
MENNO TRAVEL
NO MORE WAR!

Doug Krehbiel

Henderson, Neb. (GCMC)—Walter Epp (left), Richard Gehring, Cathy Wismer, Janette Epp and Alberto Quintela act out part of the report of the Northern District Conference peace and social concerns committee.

NDC met here June 12-15 at Bethesda Mennonite Church. Among the meeting highlights were acceptance of Rochester (Minn.) Mennonite Fellowship and Emmanuel Mennonite Church, St. Paul, Minn., as NDC members.

At the annual missions banquet, delegates heard a challenge from Tong Hang, pastor at Hmong United Mennonite Church in St. Paul. Tong's congregation has raised $1,500, with four families committed to be the core, to start a new church in Minneapolis, reaching out to that city's 50,000 Hmong. The NDC home missions committee is looking for an NDC church to partner with the Hmong church and donors willing to make above-budget contributions.

Featured speaker for the gathering was Terry Hershey of Vashon, Wash., focusing on ministry to young adults. Delegates passed a budget of $261,514, a slight increase over last year's budget, despite a 20 percent reduction in giving in the last fiscal year. ***Shella Franz***

Pop and country music remain popular in Ireland, but an album of 20 Roman Catholic hymns outsold them both, says Evangelical Press News Service. "Faith of Our Fathers: Classic Religious Anthems of Ireland" spent five weeks at number one after its Oct. 21, 1996, release. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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Western District (General Conference), Rocky Mountain and South Central (Mennonite Church) conferences have created an Integration Transition Committee to explore regional integration involving the three conferences. The new committee met June 15-16 in Lakewood, Colo. The group identified a wide range of possible regional integration models. Future meetings will be scheduled along with regional gatherings. (*William R. Zuercher*)

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Pacific News Service reports that in February the U.S. Air Force received its first new nuclear warhead since the end of the Cold War. Not one major newspaper or television network thought the event important enough to report it. The weapon is a 12-foot long nuclear bomb that can burrow 50 feet into the ground before detonating with a blast thousands of times greater than the largest conventional weapon in the U.S. arsenal. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Utne Reader **reports that columnist Norman Solomon analyzed news coverage in major U.S. newspapers and wire services in 1996 and discovered what mainstream media really care about: "'Free enterprise' was used in 3,489 stories, 'free market' in 9,345, and 'property rights' in 6,802; 'labor rights' showed up in only 440 stories and 'economic justice' in only 592. The good news: 'poor children' were mentioned 3,179 times, almost as often as 'snowboarding' (3,220)." (*Salt of the Earth*)**

Record

Evangelical Press News Service reports that after Pat Boone appeared on the American Music Awards dressed as a heavy metal rock singer, Trinity Broadcasting Network dropped the singer's weekly TV show. Boone's latest album, *Pat Boone in a Metal Mood—No More Mr. Nice Guy*, gives a jazz and big-band treatment to heavy metal classics. He wore a black leather jacket and pants, fake tattoos and a studded collar and bracelets when he presented the award for best heavy metal album at the AMA. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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A Barna Report survey indicates that Christians are pretty much keeping up with the rest of society on technology. For example, 90 percent of Christians (compared with 84 percent of others) have VCRs; 31 percent (vs. 34 percent) have personal computers; and 29 percent (vs. 25 percent) have cellular phones. Among computer owners, Christians are even more likely than others to have access to the Internet (23 percent compared with 17 percent). There are an estimated 5.6 million Christians on the Net. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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Evangelical Press News Service reports that Kleberg County, Texas, commissioners voted unanimously in favor of a resolution to replace "hello" with a new greeting: "heaven-o." Leonoso Canales, originator of the idea, told the *San Antonio Express News*, "I can see the 'hell' in 'hello.' It's disguised by the 'o,' but once you see it, it will slap you in the face." Canales wanted the commissioners to make "heaven-o" the county's official greeting, but the resolution only urges its use. Canales plans to go to Texas governor George W. Bush to propose making "heaven-o" the state's official greeting. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

AIMM—Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
COM—Commission on Overseas Mission
MBM—Mennonite Board of Missions
MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
NAA—North America Assignment

MINISTERS

Verle Brubaker was installed as pastor at Calvary Church, Washington, Ill., Feb. 9.

Marvin Friesen was installed as a member of the pastoral ministry team at Grace Church, Chicago, March 23. Friesen is principal of Chicago Mennonite Learning Center.

Howard Palmatier was installed as pastor at Paoli (Ind.) Fellowship Feb. 23.

WORKERS

Carol and **Phil Bergen**, COM/AIMM workers in Burkina Faso since 1990, returned to California in May for a seven-month NAA.

Clair and **Faye Brenneman**, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, Palmer Lake, Colo., began four-year MCC terms in Indonesia as country representatives.

Bill Derksen, Peace Church, Richmond, B.C., COM worker in Japan since 1983, returned to Canada in June for a six-week NAA.

Timothy Eisenbeis and **Anita Musselman**, Salem-Zion Church, Freeman, S.D., are beginning four-year MCC terms in Brazil as country representatives.

Gloria and **Mark Epp**, Zoar Church, Langham, Sask., COM/MBM workers in Brazil since 1993, returned to Canada in June for a two-year NAA. They will live in Winnipeg, and plan to return to Latin America in 1999.

Dave and **Pat Falk**, COM/MBM workers in Brazil since 1990, completed their assignment and returned to Abbotsford, B.C., in May.

Michael Graham and **Hulene Montgomery**, Kitchener-Waterloo (Ont.) House Church, are beginning five-year MCC terms in Burkina Faso as country representatives.

Jan and **Rick Janzen**, Mennonite Fellowship of Rosthern (Sask.) Church, are beginning five-year MCC terms in Lebanon in December, working as country representatives.

Dave and **Mary Lou Klassen**, Waterloo (Ont.) North Church, are beginning four-year

C. Bergen

P. Bergen

C. Brenneman

F. Brenneman

Derksen

Eisenbeis

Musselman

G. Epp

M. Epp

Graham

Montgomery

J. Janzen

Nanny position: Children 8 and 12. Salary negotiable, minimum $6.50/hr. **Call (316) 682-1661**.

Newton Et Cetera Shop seeks manager to assume responsibilities Aug. 1. Full-time position salaried. Apply at **619 Main St., Newton, KS 67114; (316) 283-9461**.

Rosthern Mennonite Church invites applications for the position of **leading pastor**. Duties to commence as early as Oct. 1, with later starting dates negotiable.

Resumes should be mailed to **Search Committee, Box 454, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0, by Aug. 15.**

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open for the 1997-98 school year: **mathematics instructor** (full-time).

Send resumes or inquiries to **Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Interim Reference Librarian: Bluffton College invites applications for a one-year, interim position of reference librarian. Master's degree in library science from an ALA-accredited program required. Experience with providing service using general reference sources, both print and electronic; experience using Dialog; and evidence of excellent communication skills necessary. Prefer experience with government documents or interlibrary loan, Passport for Windows, and a working knowledge of computer hardware and software, including DOS and Windows. Responsibilities include assisting library users with online, CD-ROM and print resources; classroom instruction; interlibrary loan, and government documents collection management. Some evening and weekend hours required. Bluffton College is a four-year, Christian liberal arts college affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church. Musselman Library houses over 130,000 volumes and subscribes to more than 400 periodicals and is a 10 percent selective depository for U.S. government publications. The library uses the Horizon automated system. Consideration of applications continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at **www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac**.

Submit letter of application, resume or vita, three letters of reference, and unofficial transcripts to **Amy M. Tabler, Assistant to the V.P. and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196**. EOE

MCC terms in Kampala, Uganda, as country representatives.

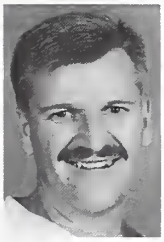
Suzanne and **Tim Lind**, Three Rivers, Mich., are beginning an MCC term in South Africa. Suzanne will be country representative; Tim will work with African congregations.

Tim Pannabecker, First Church, Bluffton, Ohio, is beginning a three-year MCC term in Akron, Pa., as an assistant director in personnel.

Janet and **Stephen Plenert**, Olivet Church, Abbotsford, B.C., COM/MBM workers in Brazil since 1993, returned to Canada in June for a one-year NAA. They will study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., then live in British Colombia until summer 1998, when they plan to return to Brazil.

Marietta and **Sheldon Sawatzky**, Pine Grove Church, Bowmansville, Pa., COM workers in Taiwan since 1965, have completed their assignment. Sheldon will be COM/MBM administrator for East Asia, working in Newton, Kan.

Eldon and **Jane Wagler**, Hively Avenue Church, Elkhart, Ind., are beginning six-year MCC terms in Syria as country representatives.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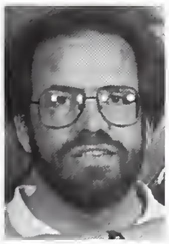
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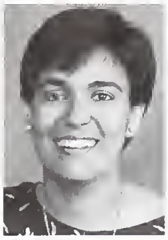
J. Wagler

Only 20 percent of the world's major virgin forests remain, according to World Resources Institute. Almost all are in northern Russia and Canada and in Brazil's Amazon region. All of North Africa, the Middle East and most of Europe have lost their frontier forests. (*Peace and Social Justice Center of South Central Kansas Newsletter*)

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The Karen people of Burma are getting ready for attack from Burma's ruling junta for their refusal to traffic in narcotics, reports *Compass Direct*. The Karen, who are nearly 40 percent Christian, say that it is "against Christian principles to deal in drugs to attain peace." The group, who number 2.6 million, have been at war with the government for 30 years to win autonomy. More than 17 other ethnic groups in the country have received concessions from Burma's military after agreeing to opium trafficking with the military. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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Burma's pro-democracy leader and 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi praised the Clinton administration for imposing economic sanctions on her country, saying they were justified by government repression. On April 22, the administration banned new U.S. investments in Burma, citing the military junta's harsh treatment of its democratic opposition. Participants in an April 25 news conference were photographed and videotaped by government security agents as they arrived. "The reason the U.S. decided to impose sanctions is because they feel that investing in Burma now is investing in injustice," said Suu Kyi. Amnesty International, the London-based human rights group, said 1996 was the worst year ever for human rights in Burma. It cited the arrest of thousands of democracy activists, a government-orchestrated mob attack on Suu Kyi and continued harassment of all opposition. (*Associated Press*)

Reviews

BOOKS

A NEW PATH

Mujerista Theology, *by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz (Orbis, 1996, 210 pages, $16 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Elizabeth Soto, Lancaster, Pa.

This book is not just another feminist theology. Through these pages Isasi-Diaz, a Cuban American, presents a new perspective for women and invites others to join her search for a feminist approach to their reality.

"Mujerista" comes from the Spanish "mujer"—woman. Isasi-Diaz says the book's goal is "to provide a platform for the voices of Latina women, to develop a theological method that takes seriously the religious understanding and practice of Latinas as a resource for theology."

This is not exclusively a theology for Latinas but a theology from the Latina perspective that strives to work for the liberation of the oppressed in community. It places equal weight on sexism, ethnic prejudice and economic oppression as main factors in the daily lives of Hispanic women—issues most white, middle-class, feminist theologians have not been able to address properly.

Mujerista theology helps explain our faith as Latinas and its role in our struggles for liberation. It gives a new meaning to "solidarity" as more than just a disposition. Solidarity must become a "new way of living out 'love your neighbor as yourself,'" and a recognition of the interdependence of all people and the need to work together for the radical structural change necessary for liberation to all.

The author explains key elements of the reality of Latina women's lives such as "la familia," where Latina women both feel valued and disrespected but are nevertheless "historical protagonists."

The book concludes with a liturgy, developed for a Latina women's gathering to represent the struggles, hopes and victories of the women.

Isasi-Diaz was dissatisfied by what the feminist movement had to offer her as a Christian Latina woman. Her account of the painful experiences in her search for a theology she could own make this book both difficult to put down or to read too fast.

Mujerista
Theology
Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz

Reading this book requires us to use our hearts and minds, to feel the reality lived not only by Isasi-Diaz but by many African-American, Native American, Asian American and Latina sisters. Her story becomes our story, offering us a new path and a new way of thinking through what we Latina women have seen, heard and lived. This book will also provoke profound thoughts for those of other ethnic groups who are looking for a new song.

TOWARD PARTNERSHIP

Leading Women *by Carol E. Becker (Abingdon, 1996, 206 pages, $14.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Renee Sauder, Waterloo, Ont.

Drawing upon recent literature and research, Carol Becker reveals how patriarchal patterns of thinking and behavior continue to marginalize, dismiss and injure women who function in leadership in the church.

But *Leading Women* is not a book written just for women, describing the challenges of women serving in the church's varied ministries. Becker is clear from the beginning that this is a book about women and men working together in the church. She is careful in presenting a studied perspective that does not "inflate the feminine or trash the masculine."

To that end, Becker outlines the heavy responsibility that both genders must carry in the task of self-definition as ministering people and in establishing truly collegial relationships. She outlines the gender traps women and men fall into, the embedded patterns of thinking and relating that prevent the utilization of new and creative expressions of leadership in the church.

Becker presents new paradigms for leadership and explores strategies that will create a shared work environment. Most helpfully she presents specific tasks that men and women must do to bring about both personal and systemic change that will advance women's vocation in ministry.

This book will be a helpful resource for men and women who work together in multiple church staff set-

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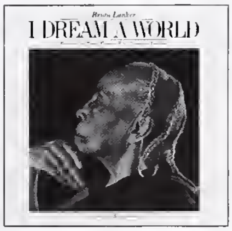
tings. It provides a framework from which to talk about the easily and not so easily definable issues that can stand in the way of equitable and meaningful working relationships.

UNSINKABLE SPIRITS

I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America *by Brian Lanker (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1989, 168 pages, $40 U.S. hardcover, $24.95 U.S. paperback)*

Reviewed by Esther Bohn Groves, North Newton, Kan.

Jackie Torrance pushed the whites' water fountain "to see if the water came out white." Sherian Grace Cadoria walked five miles to school, although a school bus passed her house, because blacks could not ride the bus. Whenever Elizabeth Cotten's parents heard horses' hoofbeats on the bridge, they buried the meat they had butchered so the whites would see nothing to take. Winson Hudson said when white men "caught a girl alone ... they'd just rape her. Parents was afraid to say too much. ...You might be visited by the KKK."



Law firms would not interview law graduate Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. Janet Collins was told at an audition she was a wonderful ballet dancer but would have to be painted white. She refused, deeply hurt, but eventually became the prima ballerina of the Metropolitan Opera "because I couldn't be topped." In the civil rights struggle, Unita Blackwell risked her life to register voters, living daily with jailings, harassment and fear. "They ... burned crosses in my yard, threw homemade bombs. ... [Change] didn't come without pain."

The 75 greatly varied black women that Brian Lanker interviewed and photographed learned to overcome the wounds of injustice. After Ernestine Anderson was beaten up at school and came home saying, "I hate 'em, I hate 'em," her grandmother counseled, "Before you go to bed ... say a prayer for those people."

"I can't do it."

"Well, you have to, because you cannot carry hate in your heart for anybody."

Lanker portrays both well-known and little-known women, linked by refusal to let hatred kill their spirit and channeling anger into professional excellence and social improvement. The book's attractive format invites browsing, the photos are striking and the reminiscences are invaluable in helping whites understand the experience of minorities and the courage needed to achieve goals. Full of quotable wisdom and hope, this is an inspiring book to read again and again because it chronicles both triumphs over racism and the universal need to rise above the hardships of life.

Resources

- **Surviving Church Conflict** by Dave Peters (Herald Press, 1997, $10.99 U.S./$15.75 Cdn.) asserts that peacemakers need to be spiritually fit, at peace with God, in order to deal with conflict.
- **Beyond the News: Money** is a video on stewardship issues and on how we view and use money. Available from Mennonite Media, 1-800-999-3534; $24.95 U.S./$35.25 Cdn.
- **Flowers on My Grave: How an Ojibwa Boy's Death Helped Break the Silence on Child Abuse** by Ruth Teichroeb (HarperCollins, 1997, $26 U.S.) explores the tragedy of abused Native children in Canada, and how government and local agencies perpetuated this abuse.
- **Understanding Sound Systems** is a 108-minute video to help increase your knowledge of design, installation and operation of sound systems in your congregation; includes information on wireless microphones, cause and cure of feedback and more. Available for $39.95 U.S. plus $3.95 shipping from Atlantic Audio Systems, P.O. Box 58703, Raleigh, NC 27658; (919) 876-8432.
- **Pure Kingdom: Jesus' Vision of God** by Bruce Chilton (Eerdmans, 1996, $15 U.S.) is the first volume in the publisher's "Studying the Historical Jesus" series.
- **After 50: Spiritually Embracing Your Own Wisdom Years** by Robert J. Wicks (Paulist Press, 1997, $12.95 U.S.) helps one prepare spiritually for retirement.
- **Such Is the Way of the World: A Journey Through Grief** by Barbara Schiff Brisson (Paulist Press, 1997, $5.95 U.S.) offers practical suggestions to help the reader move through the process of mourning.
- **The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 7** (Abingdon, 1996, $55 U.S.) includes interpretations of Daniel and the Twelve Prophets. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary professor Ben Ollenburger wrote the chapter on Zechariah.
- **Dear Heart, Come Home: The Path of Midlife Spirituality** by Joyce Rupp (Crossroad, 1997, $13.95 U.S.) is a guide to discovering spiritual riches in midlife.
- **The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity** by Mark Shaw (Baker, 1996, $19.99 U.S.) begins with history of the church before Islam, the church during the centuries of Islamic domination, missions and colonial era, and 20th-century Africa.
- **When God Doesn't Answer: Removing Roadblocks to Answered Prayer** by Woodrow Kroll (Baker, 1997, $11.99 U.S.) identifies 12 "prayer blockers," or things that can create interference between us and God.
- **Job and the Mystery of Suffering: Spiritual Reflections** by Richard Rohr (Crossroad, 1996, $19.95 U.S.) is a commentary and chapter-by-chapter study of the themes in Job.
- **Women in the Time of AIDS** by Gillian Paterson (Orbis, 1997, $14 U.S.) gives faces and experiences to the 14 million women worldwide who will be infected with AIDS by the year 2000.

Part-time teaching positions available at the **Chicago Mennonite Learning Center.** Library position includes library supervision and story times; P.E. and Art positions for grades K-8. Applicants with teacher training and experience will be given preference. Ten-month contract begins Aug. 18.

For more information or to request application materials, contact **Marv Friesen, Principal, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632; (773) 735-9304.**

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Editorial

More than a name

By the end of this century—which, by the way, is midnight on Dec. 31, 2000—the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) will likely have one General Board and one delegate body. Barring something unforeseen, we will be called Mennonite Church (see page 13). But what kind of church will we be?

At the recent GC sessions in Winnipeg, July 6-8, we met under the theme "Transformed in Christ." We discussed at length the value of using the name "Mennonite Church." Many said it is too arrogant, that it excludes other Mennonite groups. Others said it's simple and an effective way to communicate with people unfamiliar with Mennonites. And one wise woman quoted Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*): "What's in a name?" It's our attitude that's important, how we live out that name.

Many spoke from the floor and from the pulpit about the need to proclaim the gospel of Christ, a message of healing and hope to our hurting world. We need to invite everyone to experience God's love. And we saw evidence of that welcoming spirit in the songs we sang, the inclusion of women and young people in the worship leading and speaking. I felt warmly accepted and affirmed by many people there.

> **Those we want to welcome into our churches we never see because we don't go where they are.**

Yet signs of exclusion became evident as well. A gay man spoke in a trembling voice that he did not feel welcomed there because the church that owned the facility we were using did not allow groups that support gay and lesbian church members to meet there.

As I looked at the sea of people in the sanctuary, my gaze met almost exclusively white faces, people of European ancestry. Delegates from Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference who brought a resolution on global mission said that churches in their conference represent 10 language groups. And everyone heartily agreed with their call to welcome the people in our midst from around the world and to reach out to others. Yet, at least at our delegate sessions, we're mostly white.

And our voices are mostly male. Robert Kreider, a noted historian from North Newton, Kan., gave me his "gender count" after the conference. Of the speeches from the conference floor in response to the various resolutions or proposals, 126 came from men, and 23 from women. When I mentioned this to a veteran of Mennonite Church assemblies, he said, "That's a higher percentage [of women] than you'll find at Orlando" (where the MCs gather in late July).

In spite of our best intentions, we exclude. Those we want to welcome into our churches we never see because we don't go where they are. I met a Native man named Dale, a friend of my hosts in Winnipeg. He is a quiet, warm individual who is proud of his people's ways of healing and nurturing the earth. He works at a shelter for the poor and homeless in Winnipeg.

'A dirty Indian': On Saturday, while I sat with others in the plush, air-conditioned sanctuary of Immanuel Pentecostal Church, two police officers stopped Dale's car and ordered him out. They asked him why he was wearing sunglasses (this was around noon), and when they didn't like his answer, they hit him in the head with a billy club, then walked away. They didn't stop him because he was speeding or had committed an infraction. He was "a dirty Indian," as one officer said.

When we asked Dale about this incident, he shrugged. "It happens all the time," he said.

As we seek to be an inclusive church, we must recognize that powerful forces exist around us that tear people apart, that exclude from power those who are not white or male or English-speaking or heterosexual or old enough or Mennonite. To be a church "transformed in Christ," we will need to use language that includes others. But more than that, our hearts must swell with God's compassionate love.

If the Mennonite Church of the coming century is not to be arrogant, we will need to live out the vision of healing and hope we have agreed to, so that we may "grow as communities of grace, joy and peace," where the hurting are welcomed and defended. *Gordon Houser*

Recyclable

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CMC approves magazine, celebrates CMBC / p. 13

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 15
AUGUST 12, 1997

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SEP 4 '97

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- Youth 'stake their claim' in record numbers (page 8)

Janeen
Bertsche
Johnson
Eighth Street Mennonite
Goshen, Indiana
Stake your claim

A stake in the future

Stories and photos from Winnipeg '97

Prologue

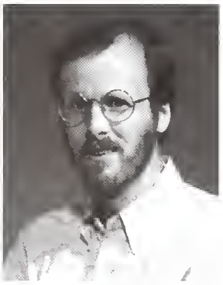
Conference is a time for meeting old friends, for claiming our identity, for looking at where we've been as a denomination and where we want to go. This issue celebrates the latest sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) with stories and photos.

Since this was a special session, held only two years after our previous meeting, instead of the usual three years, it was shorter than usual. There was less time for discussing business or attending workshops or visiting with friends. But we made the most of the time we had. We reported much of the decision making in our previous issue (July 22, page 13). Here we take a broader look at Winnipeg '97.

Steve Estes gives an overview of the original vision of GC founders (page 5).

Young adults had a meeting with conference leaders to discuss their place in the future integration of the GC and Mennonite Church bodies (page 7).

An exciting part of conference was the youth conference, to which record numbers of youth came (page 8). If these youth represent our future, I'm pretty hopeful.



The Conference of Mennonites in Canada held its annual sessions just before the GC sessions. See Melanie Zuercher's report on page 13.

As we approach the end of August, don't forget to send us the student subscriptions from your church. *gh*

Next issue: Keeping the Sabbath

Cover: Photo by Dave Linscheid

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The Mennonite is a member of Associated Church Press, Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse (a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group) and an associate member of Canadian Church Press.

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General
Conference
Mennonite
Church

In perhaps the last separate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church, youth and adults celebrate the past and seek a vision for the future.

Looking back, looking forward

Gordon Houser

Conferences serve many purposes. If you ask why people come to conference, you'll most often hear, "To meet old friends and make new ones." Some come primarily to discuss the issues and help make decisions. But most agree that it's good to get together with other Mennonites, to worship together and just to talk.

Several speakers at Winnipeg '97 referred to it as perhaps the last time the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) meets in separate sessions. Delegates in Winnipeg agreed that in 1999, when the GC meets jointly with the Mennonite Church (MC), they will look at a plan to merge the two denominations' delegate bodies and General Boards.

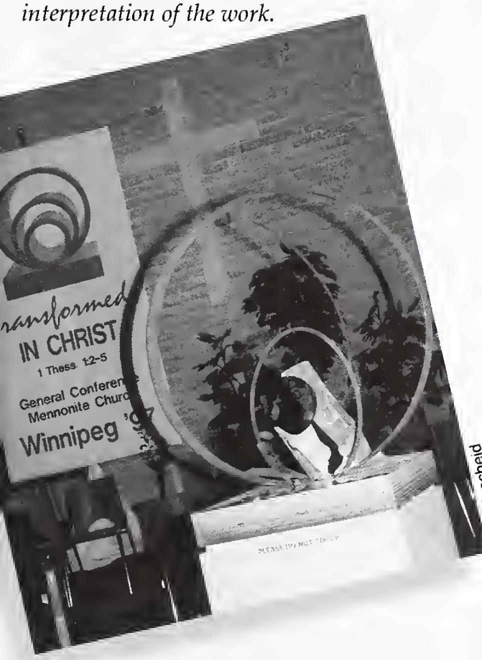
Because of this, many saw Winnipeg '97 as a time of looking back and looking forward. In the first session, Steve Estes, a young pastor and historian from Illinois, offered a look back at the beginnings of the GC and its original vision (see his article on page 5). Then Waldemar Janzen, just retired as professor of Old Testament at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, offered a "vision for our future" in which he referred to Isaiah 2:2-5. He called for us to let God's vision, not current trends, guide us. Our joining with the MC must be to "walk in the light of the Lord" toward "the mountain of the Lord's house," he said.

While the adults at Winnipeg '97 met under the theme "Transformed in Christ," the youth gathered under the theme "Staking Your Claim" (see the article on page 8). The adults worshiped and conducted business (see the news article on page 13 of our July 22 issue). The youth worshiped, did service projects and had fun.

Some expressed a wistfulness about this possibly being the last separate sessions for the GC. With a relatively smaller group of people comes a greater sense of intimacy. The youth especially noticed this. Even though their numbers swelled to more than 600 (three times more than what planners anticipated), many youth felt they got to know a lot of the people there. At joint gatherings, like Wichita '95, more than 4,000 youth come together, which can make for a less intimate event.

The mix of adults and youth, of looking back and reaching forward, permeated the sessions. Delegates unanimously passed a mission statement for congregational youth ministry. Youth led one evening's worship.

Visuals: *Winnipeg '97 included nonverbal responses. With the banner announcing the theme of the conference is a sculpture by Winnipeg artist Gerald Loewen. Participants were invited to look at it and come up with their own interpretation of the work.*



Dave Linscheid

Dave Linscheid

'Your sons and daughters shall prophesy': *Youth clowns act out healing and hope vision.*

Winnipeg '97 index

Registration

Adults: 745
Youth (and sponsors): 615
Junior high: 34
Elementary: 51
Preschool: 22
Nursery: 10

Other tidbits

Number of times a man spoke from the floor during delegate discussions: 126

Number of times a woman spoke from the floor during delegate discussions: 23

Temperature (unofficial) at midnight on July 5: 37 F, 3 C

Equivalent years of voluntary service performed by youth while at Winnipeg '97: 5

Pounds of food collected by youth for local food bank: 2,500

> ***Our joining with the Mennonite Church must be to "walk in the light of the Lord" toward "the mountain of the Lord's house."***
>
> ***Waldemar Janzen***

One delegate, Jake Pauls, Waterloo, Ont., quoted from Joel 2:28: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." Later he shared his sense that the youth "will bring greater clarity about what God is doing in the world."

On the other hand, I spoke with David Habegger, Fort Wayne, Ind., who said he has been to every GC session since 1941. (See also Erland Waltner's reflections on page 11 about missing this conference.)

While celebrating the GC's 137-year-old history and vision of uniting for mission, Winnipeg '97 also celebrated its youth, with their energy and vision, and claimed a stake for the future.

Gordon Houser is editor of The Mennonite.

Gordon Houser

Marching in the light of the Lord: *One of the 117 children at Winnipeg '97*

Our morning and evening star

Steve Estes

Let's carry on the original vision of the founders of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

All Believers, fathers, mothers,
As well as children, sisters, brothers,
Be always loyal to the Lord,
Do not allow anything or anybody
To separate you from the Lord,
Whom we know,
Follow Him, our morning-star.

Above is the first verse of a poem originally composed in German by Henry Ellenberger (1784-1869), a Mennonite minister ordained in 1812, who came from the Rhenish Palatinate in Germany to Lee County, Iowa, in 1850 at age 67 (Howard Raid, *Henry Ellenberger: Pastor, Poet, Pioneer, Organizer of the Zion Mennonite Church, 1851*).

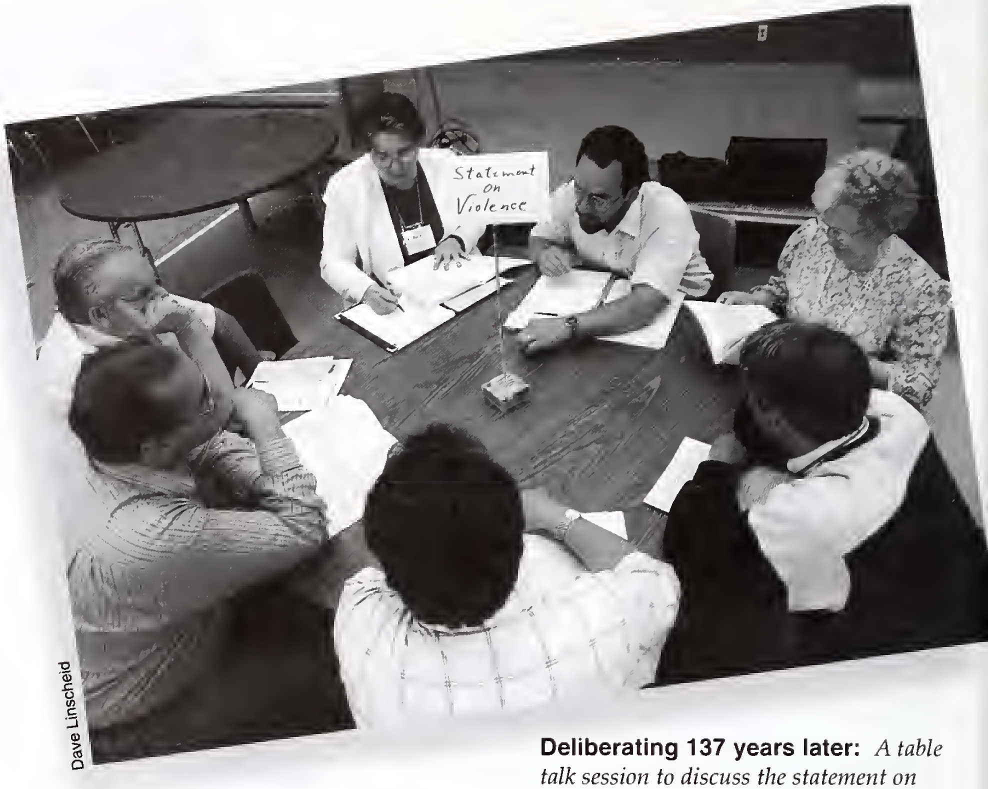
There on the prairies of Iowa, with people like Henry Ellenberger and a conviction to "be always loyal to the Lord," the General Conference Mennonite Church began. These south German settlers in southeastern Iowa had been part of the South German Mennonite Conference. In 1853 two little Mennonite congregations at West Point and Franklin Prairie decided they needed something like it and adopted a common constitution. On March 21, 1859, they felt an urgent sense of call to accomplish something for home and foreign missions and to recognize that only in united action could they secure good results in mission. They called for a meeting on the second day of Pentecost, 1860, in the German Methodist Church in West Point, Iowa, and invited other Mennonite churches "for the purpose of considering ways and means for the unification of all Mennonites of North America" (H.P. Krehbiel, *The History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America*; and S.F. Pannabecker, *Open Doors: The History of the General Conference Mennonite Church*. The Franklin Prairie congregation is now Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson, Iowa, and the West Point congregation discontinued in the 1880s.).

John Oberholtzer (1809-1895), a minister separated from the Franconia Conference in 1847 and founder of the East Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Church, who himself had advocated a "union of all the [Mennonite] churches in America" since 1856 (Krehbiel), published the report of this meeting in his periodical *Das Christliche Volksblatt* on April 20, 1859. He rejoiced that the western brothers and sisters were seeking to "blow the ashes from the glimmering coals that the flame of the Lord may appear" (quoted in Pannabecker and in Krehbiel).

The next year "Father" Oberholtzer traveled the hundreds of miles from Pennsylvania to Iowa to attend and chair the first session of the General Conference Mennonite Church, which was held May 28-29, 1860. Sunday, May 27, 1860, was Pentecost. Someone

The first resolution of this meeting of five little congregations declared "that all branches of the Mennonite denomination in North America, regardless of minor differences, should extend to each other the hand of fellowship."

The bright places of our memories of what it means for us to be the General Conference Mennonite Church are bright because of the places in which the flame of the Lord glimmers in our churches, reflecting the light of the Morning Star.



Dave Linscheid

Deliberating 137 years later: *A table talk session to discuss the statement on violence*

described the Communion service that day like this:

"In observance of this occasion [and as] a preparation for the unification deliberations which were to begin on the day following, the Lord's Supper was celebrated. The visitors from abroad [the Pennsylvanians, that is] also took part in this. To be assembled under these peculiar circumstances could not fail to bring the hearts of those sincere Christians into closer fellowship; being consciously reminded that all have but one and the same Lord" (Krehbiel).

The first resolution of this meeting of five little congregations declared "that all branches of the Mennonite denomination in North America, regardless of minor differences, should extend to each other the hand of fellowship" (Krehbiel). And "all who hold to the fundamental doctrine of our confession, reach to each other the hand of fellowship and overlook those minor points wherein salvation is not to be found" (Pannabecker).

This was the basis of unification: "The fundamental doctrines of the denomination ... which we with Menno base solely upon the Gospel as received from our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles" (Krehbiel). The union was to be conformable to 1 Corinthians 12:12-27: "All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it" (Today's English Version).

And the reason for this union? "That hereafter Home and Foreign Mission shall be carried on according to ability by our denomination!" And education and publication were to resource this united church for its mission (Krehbiel).

"Unification for mission" could have been their motto. With this vision for mission the "hand of fellowship" extends across the trajectory of these 137 years from a few south Germans and Pennsylvanians to a Vietnamese Mennonite church in Winnipeg; from the prairies of Iowa to the subcontinent of India and beyond. And some have left to seek the place for them where salvation might be found.

After the first conference in 1860 John Carl Krehbiel (1811-1886) wrote of his attendance there: "I must confess that the pentecostal days which our heavenly father permitted us to enjoy will remain as an especially bright place in my memory of the past. For seemingly we were taken by the unifying spirit of God and together lifted to Tabor's height. Who would censure us for being filled with the wish to stay the flow of time, saying with the disciples, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here'" (Krehbiel).

The flow of time is not stayed. God's Spirit is still at work among us. It is good for us to be the General Conference Mennonite Church. It is good for us to be wherever it is that God leads. The bright places of our memories of what it means for us to be the General Conference Mennonite Church are bright because of the places in which the flame of the Lord glimmers in our churches, reflecting the light of the Morning Star.

When Henry Ellenberger wrote of Jesus Christ as the Morning Star, he surely knew that the same planet that we see as the morning star is also the one that we see as the evening star. And in this time of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Jesus Christ is the Evening Star leading us to new life; giving us these "pentecostal days" in which to be loyal to him; sharing with us the unity of the Spirit that we are "all Christ's body, and each one is a part of it"; giving us the opportunity to extend the hand of fellowship a little further in the Mennonite family, helping remind ourselves that we have "but one and the same Lord"; challenging us to extend the "hand of fellowship" a little further to our neighbors and the stranger and the enemy; in remembering and proclaiming the glorious deeds of the Lord, that we are being transformed in Christ; that we have a mission that we cannot do alone—that salvation may be found in us—a salvation we proclaim by being "Christ's body, and each one is a part of it." It is a mission that we live when we "follow him, our Morning Star."

This article is based on comments at Winnipeg '97. Steve is pastor at Flanagan (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

In search of a **young adult-friendly** church

Young adults consult with integration leaders.

Aiden Schlichting Enns

Young adult participation in church is in decline. Will the new Mennonite denomination address this problem?

That's the question Doug Klassen sought to answer by bringing 25 young adults face to face with nine people responsible for the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC).

The meeting took place July 5 at Immanuel Pentecostal Church, site of the meeting of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) and the special GC delegate session, July 3-8.

Klassen, young adult minister for the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, began the discussion by asking if the integration process will address the issue of waning interest in church among Mennonite young adults.

"To expect the Integration Committee to solve that problem is asking it to carry too much freight," said George Stoltzfus, MC general secretary.

Because the new integrated denomination is still in formation, "this is an excellent opportunity to 'legislate' young adult involvement" in church leadership, said Pam Peters Pries, Winnipeg.

"The voice of a young adult pushes an edge that I don't think otherwise would be pushed. … The physical presence of young people on program boards makes people listen to themselves differently," she said. Peters Pries is the newly elected secretary of the CMC General Board.

Angela Reed, a young adult and youth pastor at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, added that choosing young adults as delegates to conference is a good way to get them involved.

The GC currently employs one staff person, Ken Hawkley, to work in the area of young adult ministry. The MC has no counterpart. Klassen asked if staffing for young adults would increase when the denominations merge, or "should Ken Hawkley resource and visit 500 more congregations?"

Melanie Zuercher

Young adults in action: *Liturgical movement by Carole Sawatzky (left) and Wendy Janzen*

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, co-chair of the Integration Committee, implied that the staffing question is beyond the committee's mandate.

"We are to provide the identity but not get in the way of ministries. … We're not a ministry committee," she said.

She added later that "we can't say the number of staff [in an area of ministry] but we can say we think there should be some resourcing [for] young adults."

James Schrag, GC general secretary, said he wants the new denomination to be "user-friendly." Regarding staffing, he said, "Those are 'how-to' questions, not 'whether' questions."

Hawkley broadened the focus of the discussion. "How can we position meetings so they are easier for young adults to get to?" He suggested having some "dreaming sessions" where current structures could be "suspended" in order to find something new.

"I've heard a number of [area] conferences say they'd like to have a greater number of young adults, but they haven't made them feel welcome," he said.

Nickel Friesen said that once both denominational assemblies are over (MC delegates met in Orlando July 29-Aug. 2), the Integration Committee will likely hold "regional consultations to call folks to do precisely what you are saying."

Peters Pries said she felt "strongly" that a conference more friendly for young adults would "make it more friendly for other adults."

At the conclusion of the meeting, John C. Murray, Integration Committee co-chair, thanked organizers for the gathering. "It's a great idea."

Ron Sawatsky, CMC moderator, put in the final word: "Keep pushing us."

Aiden Schlichting Enns is Manitoba provincial editor for Mennonite Reporter.

Grateful: *Abe Bergen makes a phone call.*

Youth **'stake their claim'** in record numbers

More than 600 youth and sponsors keep a positive spirit and help serve others in Winnipeg.

Melanie A. Zuercher

Neither Manitoba mosquitoes, a facility stretched well beyond its capacity nor cold, sometimes rainy, weather seemed to dampen the enthusiasm at the Winnipeg '97 youth convention.

The event took place July 3-8 at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC). It required some ingenuity to adapt a campus with a "maximum capacity" of 200 to the eventual total of 615 youth and sponsors, the largest youth gathering ever held in connection with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and one of the largest for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) as a whole.

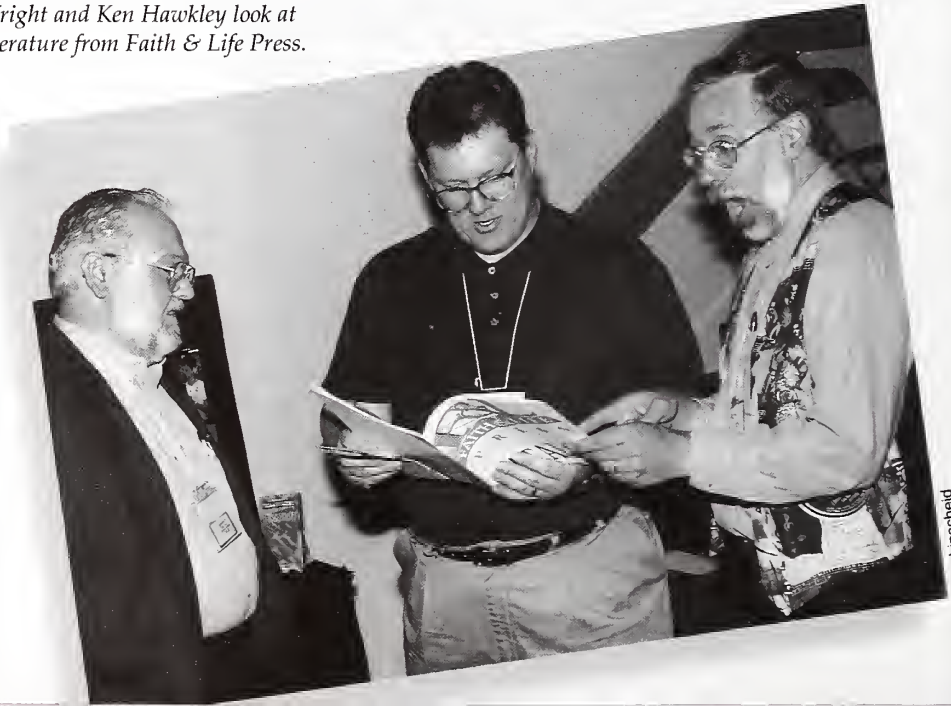
The stage for the worship speakers and band and the food lines were all set up under a large white tent. Sleeping accommodations included gym floors at nearby St. Paul's and Tuxedo-Shaftesbury high schools, cots set up in lounges and anywhere else extra space could be found in the CMBC classroom building and a forest of tents in the field south of the campus.

Sometimes the crowded facilities became even more so when chilly nights drove tenters into the gyms with their pillows and sleeping bags.

The tents were an appropriate accompaniment to the conference theme, "Staking Your Claim," based on Isaiah 54:2, which says, "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes" (NIV). Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau, associate pastor at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., and Randy Friesen, Waterloo, Ont., director of Youth Mission International, gave input on the theme during mass worship sessions. Randy Hildebrand, youth pastor at Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church, led morning devotionals based on Luke 10.

Service emphasis: Service and ministry were central components to the convention. The four projects chosen by Monty Graber from Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., reflected a cross-

'I can't believe that many youth came': *Dennis Good (left), Jeff Wright and Ken Hawkley look at literature from Faith & Life Press.*



Dave Linscheid

Melanie Zuercher

section of the options available: visiting the largest food bank in Manitoba (youth at the convention collected 2,500 pounds of food to donate to the bank); building a sidewalk in front of Walnut House, a facility for aboriginal people recovering from hospital stays before returning home; cleaning up a woodpile on the CMBC campus, which was in the middle of remodeling and preparation for a 50th anniversary celebration; protesting in front of a SuperValue grocery store to bring attention to Nestle's practice of exploiting Third World women with its infant formula sales strategies.

Other options included learning to clown in order to minister to nursing home residents and patients at a children's hospital as well as adults at the GC delegate sessions; moving some of the millions of sandbags left after massive flooding on the Red River around Winnipeg in May; spending a day with the local Habitat for Humanity chapter and a "mini learning tour" to Winnipeg's inner city.

"On this tour, one agency we visited left the needles [from drug use] on the ground near their building so that we could see them, instead of sweeping them up in the morning like they usually do," says Vicki Penner, associate/youth pastor at Faith. "We talked about gangs and how they use prostitutes, some as young as 12, to supple-

Fun 'around the edges'

Comments from youth (and youth pastors and sponsors)

- An 18-hour bus ride so we could be confined to this little campus?
- The snacks are great but the cups are too small.
- The food bank smelled like ripe bananas. And bread.
- It has given me the opportunity to explore a whole new side of myself.
- The size of the conference is really good. You're not just a number—you walk up to staff and they know who you are. You can actually see the same people twice in a day.
- Nobody here told us we couldn't dance.
- I've never been so cold in July in my life. You can actually see your breath in the morning. It's like tenting at Thanksgiving.
- I've been able to renew friendships from Wichita '95.
- The smaller size made this more of a group bonding experience. At Wichita '95, you hardly even saw your own youth group. (youth pastor)
- The parks here are really nice.
- People like our accents.
- The fun stuff for youth happens 'around the edges'—the anti-structure stuff. They need the structure so they don't get bored, but it's the free time that really produces the group experience. (youth pastor)
- We can't find any souvenirs.
- I really enjoyed their energy, spirit, sense of humor and willingness to share sweatshirts with me. (youth sponsor)
- Several of us [seniors] got together and decided we're going to St. Louis [joint MC-GC youth convention in 1999] as youth sponsors because we had such a good time in Winnipeg.

These comments were contributed by the following youth from Faith, First and Bethel College Mennonite churches in North Newton and Newton, Kan.: Kate Becker, Jesse Brubacher, Megan Burns, Crystal Enz, Nick Enz, Ladd Epp, Monty Graber, Edith Lichti, Sarah Rempel, Erin Schmidt, Jonathan Wiebe and Jesse Woolery, along with associate/youth pastor Vicki Penner and youth sponsor Carmen Schmidt, both from Faith.

Major focus: *A band assembled for the conference leads the youth in singing.*

Dave Linscheid

> ***"Kids lined up at the microphone for a half hour, and sponsors shared stories of work projects and the responses of recipients."***
>
> ***Abe Bergen***

ment their income. We also saw rays of hope, like a co-op grocery store in a 'bad' neighborhood."

Abe Bergen, GC director of youth ministry and youth convention coordinator, thinks the service emphasis helped draw more than three times the expected number of 200 participants.

"Almost 75 percent of the youth from Northern District Conference attended," he says. "[NDC's] youth groups really like to participate in service projects—Brad [Carlson, NDC youth minister] said that was one reason their [attendance] was so strong."

High point: Worship and singing were also a major focus. A band assembled for the convention led music during youth worship sessions as well as on Monday evening, when youth and adults meeting together packed Immanuel Pentecostal Church (site of the adult sessions) to the rafters and even left some people standing around the edges.

Among the special music participants was Aurora, members of the youth group from the New Life Faith Community, a small, Spanish-speaking congregation in Toronto.

Learning by doing

Editor's note: *During a workshop at the youth convention, Karen Schlichting Enns (at far left in photo below) taught the youth how to organize and carry out an effective nonviolent demonstration. In this case, the youth chose to demonstrate against Nestle, for reasons given below. This "press release" was written as part of the exercise—learning to make effective use of the media.*

NESTLE IS THE FORMULA OF A DEAD GENERAT'N
DOES FORMU GIVE LIFE OR DEATH
SAVE A BABY
BOYCOTT

Monty Graber

Youth from Canada and the United States led an action in Winnipeg July 4. This action was in favor of a boycott against Nestle products. Out of the 600 people attending the Winnipeg '97 Mennonite Youth Convention, about 30 youth came together as an interest group to organize and form this action. Along with handing out pamphlets, the activists formed a large ball depicting their issues against Nestle.

Nestle distributes free samples of milk formula to hospitals in developing countries around the world. Mothers are led to believe their own breast milk is inferior to Nestle's formula. Once the sample has been consumed, the women's breasts are dry, or the babies no longer accept their mother's milk. The women have no choice but to buy Nestle's baby formula. To stretch their own income, the mothers are forced to dilute the formula, often with contaminated water. Because of Nestle's actions, 1.5 million babies are dying each year.

Megan Burns, age 16, Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

In addition to the information noted above, these phrases were printed on the pamphlets the youth distributed: "As a consumer you affect others. You can boycott Nestle's products. Here's a list of products that you can boycott through not purchasing: Quik, Nestea, Oh Henry, KitKat, Zoodles, etc. We are the youth of the General Conference of Mennonites."

"A high point for me was Sunday evening, when we had a more informal worship service that included some young people who'd been asked to share what God was saying to them at the convention," says Bergen. "Then we opened it to whoever wanted to speak. Kids lined up at the microphone for a half hour, and sponsors shared stories of work projects and the responses of recipients."

An almost equal number of participants came from Canada and the United States, Bergen says. Northern District's group was largest, with 132, followed by Western District with 125 and Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba with 121.

Bergen's feelings at the end of the conference were, "Relieved. Energized. Grateful."

"There was a very positive spirit," he says. "I heard no complaints from kids who had to sleep on gym floors, or in tents even when it rained. The most serious injury I knew about was a broken toe during some informal recreation."

Some last-minute changes in service projects due to rain and other factors caused a bit of frustration, he says, but overall, "when unexpected changes occurred, people just rolled with it."

"I can't say enough about the incredible contributions of sponsors, conference youth ministers and many congregation members," Bergen says. "If they hadn't all jumped in and done their part and more, this wouldn't have come off as well as it did."

Added one sponsor, Carmen Schmidt from Newton, "I feel spiritually energized by our youth."

Melanie A. Zuercher is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

I miss **conference**

Erland Waltner

Today, on my 83rd birthday, my life is so full of grace. Thanks be to God. I am aware, however, that I am "missing conference." Even as I missed the Mennonite World Conference held in Calcutta in January (after having attended eight), so now in July I am missing what is likely the last of the regular sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Having attended every General Conference triennial session since 1941 and functioned in a variety of conference roles, including presiding from 1956 to 1962, I miss the sense of involvement.

But I also miss the immediate sense of belonging to something larger than a local congregation. While I continue to be active in the life of our local Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, I need to belong to something larger, with a larger vision, more resources, projects and programs than one congregation can manage on its own. I can still pray and give, but I miss the stimulation, excitement and engagement I associate with nearly six decades of conference attendance and involvement.

Missing conference also means missing people, some of the finest people God ever gave anyone to know and work with. Many have gone to be with the Lord, but others are still doing God's work by God's grace in ever more effective ways.

Missing conference also means I will miss the triennial sessions of General Conference when these are only history, replaced by whatever format the new Mennonite denomination takes in the years ahead. Had I become a "compulsive conferencegoer" and needed deliverance? Will General Conference sessions become a "Lake Wobegon" nostalgia for us in the years ahead? Do others also miss conference sessions in this way?

I am grateful for what God has done through the General Conference Mennonite Church during its history and for the privilege I have had to have some part in its last six decades. I still believe God's grace comes also through conference attendance and participation.

Erland Waltner lives in Elkhart, Ind.

Gordon Houser

All ages: *Eight-month-old Maria Suderman-Gladwell enjoys conference.*

Letters

STOP BASHING GOVERNMENT

My response to the June 24 editorial ("That's Enough"):

"That's enough" government bashing and laying blame for evil acts on the U.S. government. The government has a duty to punish evildoers: "Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13:3b-4 NIV). As a wrongdoer, Timothy McVeigh is to be punished.

"That's enough" defending McVeigh and his actions against the government. Stating that because McVeigh served in the Persian Gulf War and was taught to kill does not justify his actions. Thousands of other soldiers served in the same military operation and also were taught to kill, but we don't see them bombing government buildings and killing innocent victims.

"That's enough" stating the "U.S. government bears some responsibility for the deaths in Oklahoma City." This is what the militia movements also state.

"That's enough" blaming the media by stating "the media portray him as having no regard for the lives of innocent children." The media didn't portray him this way—he showed no emotions, remorse or feelings in this act of terrorism.

It is time we say "that's enough" to defending evil actions as being the actions of the government. McVeigh's terrorist act cannot be seen as "our responsibility." He made the choice to do evil.

It is time we praise God for our government and recognize its God-given responsibility. We as Christians are to pray for and uphold those who are in authority. When will we say "that's enough" to portraying our government as being evil?

I "am so angry and so sad" that there is no sympathy or feeling for the 168 victims and the hundreds of others affected by this terrorist act. I cannot sympathize with or defend the actions of Timothy McVeigh. *Paul Isaak, Deer Creek, Okla.*

PROGRAM COMMITTEE DID IT

In response to Eugene Thieszen's June 24 letter (page 8): The program committee of the General Conference (GC), not the "conference leadership," selected the theme "Transformed in Christ" for the Winnipeg '97 conference. The theme was not chosen "with reference to integration" and was not intended to describe "a process of organizational and administrative integration."

In planning for each denominational conference, the program committee is given the task of choosing a theme, which is normally biblically based. Our program committee wanted to stress the awareness that God continues to call us—as individuals, congregations and conferences—to new life and new growth in Christ.

I hope this clears up some of Brother Thieszen's discomfort with the conference theme. I hope we all take to heart his admonition not to "haggle over issues that primarily concern power and influence." *Janeen Bertsche Johnson, GC program committee chair, Elkhart, Ind.*

LET OTHERS NAME US

There has been a lot of anxiety expressed about the need for a name for this new denomination being integrated, and letters to this paper have expressed concern about the suggested change [Mennonite Church].

Why not be radical and let others name us? After all, that's how the names "Christians" and "Mennonites" first came into being—derisive terms of contempt by outsiders.

Let's bend our energies to more necessary tasks and leave the name-calling to others. *Vern Ratzlaff, Saskatoon*

TIMELY AND ACCURATE

I enjoyed the July 8 issue. At age 87, awaiting a cornea transplant, I will read it more carefully.

When Patty Shelly ("Putting Together the Pieces," page 8) was a year old, her father was my summer assistant at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek, Ohio. I used to carry her around on my shoulder with great glee.

From about 1972 to 1993 I had the privilege of going to the Holy Land 12 times. The articles in this issue are so timely and accurate. I used to spend a day with the liaison representatives of the Palestinians and our Mennonite Central Committee mission. I have said, "The Palestinians are not blameless, but the Israeli military government is impossible."

Keep up your good work. *William H. Stauffer, Stone Creek, Ohio*

CATHOLIC OR MENNONITE

Thanks for the two Mennonite "cross over" stories (May 27 issue). Years ago we played a game: "Where would you go if your church were abolished tomorrow?" I said, "Either Catholic or Mennonite!" Others: "You couldn't say that—they are miles apart." But something in each spoke to depths of the faith. Keep speaking. *Martin E. Marty, Chicago*

MORE NEWS FROM INDIA

You may be surprised to get this letter from a total stranger like me. I am from Durg, Madhya Pradesh, India. Dr. Joe Duerksen has kindly subscribed to *The Mennonite* for me. My wife, Snehlata, and I are here in New York visiting my brother George Walter. God willing we shall be staying here for about three months.

I am grateful to Dr. Joe Duerksen and to you for *The Mennonite.* With the first issue I got a letter from you asking for some suggestions, if any, for the magazine. I thought over this matter time and again, and I suggest you include occasional news items from the General Conference Mennonite churches at Champa, Korba, Janjgir, Jagdeeshpur and Mauhadih.

The Lord in his loving kindness has made it possible for us to be here in the United States, and we pray God will open the way for us to visit Newton, Kan., and meet with you, the board members of the General Conference, and our missionary friends from whom we received the Christian heritage.

Our "namaskar" (greetings) to all of you. *Victor Walter, Durg, M.P., India*

Correction: *In the July 22 news story on page 13, "Susanna Barrett" should have read "Susanna Mierau."*

News

CMC approves new Canadian periodical

Winnipeg—Despite being shorter than usual, the 95th session of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC), held here July 3-6 at Immanuel Pentecostal Church, still managed to be historic in several ways.

CMC sessions were truncated to allow for the special delegate session of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), which focused on integration of the GC with the Mennonite Church (see July 22 issue, page 13).

How CMC fits into that picture is, along with much else, still in process. But integration did provide some of the original energy behind one historic event at the 1997 CMC sessions: delegates passed a recommendation, already approved by the five provincial bodies that make up CMC, for one periodical, to be called *Canadian Mennonite* (a "merger" of *Mennonite Reporter* and *Nexus*).

In addition, Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), a conference-supported institution, welcomed a new president, Gerald Gerbrandt, who led two morning Bible studies during the CMC sessions; celebrated its 50th anniversary on July 6 (see sidebar, page 14), and hosted the largest youth convention ever to be associated with CMC (see story, page 8).

CMBC's anniversary created a fitting subtext to the conference theme: "The Glorious Deeds of the Lord: Remembering ... Proclaiming," based on Psalm 78. CMBC was also the focus of major discussion and reporting during the sessions.

A main issue for the college in the last several years has been federation with two other Mennonite institutions of higher education in Winnipeg—Concord College (Mennonite Brethren) and Menno Simons College (supported by an independent group and associated with the University of Winnipeg).

A decision by CMC delegates on federation was originally projected for the 1997 sessions. That was recently put back a year (to 1998) in order for more consultation with constituency, some of whom spoke up during the period set aside for that at the CMC sessions.

Frank Isaac, Winnipeg, expressed a concern echoed by others that federation not cause the "loss" of a Bible college in favor of a liberal arts college. Adelaide Fransen, Vineland, Ont., added that CMBC's theology program has had a "major, major impact on this conference."

Lydia Harder, director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, affirmed Bible and theology as the "strength of CMBC" but said this has tended to isolate other scholarship. "Federation provides a unique opportunity to integrate disciplines," she said.

However, she wondered, "Where will we find faculty? There's not a history of disciplines speaking and relating with ease to each other."

Gerbrandt agreed that a challenge for the federation is to find faculty who can facilitate those relationships.

Gary Harder, Toronto, had a comment on proposed personnel policies for faculty and staff, outlined in the federation progress reports that delegates received in their packets. The

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Gordon Houser

Remembering and proclaiming: *From left, Tym Elias, Sith Houmphan and Onong Prasong, all of Winnipeg, give the outreach and church planting report for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada Ministries Commission. Prasong, president of the Laotian Association of Manitoba, and Houmphan are involved in a worship and Bible study core group that is looking to form a church.*

Inside the news

Chinese church welcomes home 'native son' / p. 15

Youth go 'overseas' to find mission at home / p. 16

After the war, violence remains in Guatemala / p. 17

FLP names new editorial director / p. 18

All Mennonite Central Committee workers in Cambodia are safe following a week of violence between troops loyal to feuding prime ministers Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranariddh. On July 5, the MCC workers had gathered in Phnom Penh for a previously scheduled team meeting. Sunday, July 6, was "extremely noisy" as several weapons were fired from a military base about a half mile from the MCC workers. A tank shell landed some 330 yards from the MCC house where they were staying. By Monday, July 7, however, the city felt calmer, says Allen Harder, who directs MCC's Cambodia programs. By Wednesday, the MCC workers were "itching to get back to their projects," reports Harder. Most MCC workers were planning to travel back to Prey Veng and Takeo provinces, several hours' drive from Phnom Penh. Harder predicts these rural locations will be safer than the capital. MCC requests prayer for the workers' safety and for the Cambodian people. The current fighting likely ends the coalition government formed in 1993 following United Nations-supervised elections. MCC workers in Cambodia are Allen Harder and Elsiana Hutabarat-Harder and daughter; Lee and Marilyn Brockmueller and children; Larry and Sherry Groff and children; Date Mulder and Elly Hoeven Mulder, and Susan Reesor.

first proposed policy says that "faculty members [will] accept either the GC [i.e., Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective] or Mennonite Brethren confessions of faith."

"Are we making the Confession of Faith into a test?" Harder said. "This misuses how Anabaptists and Mennonites have traditionally used confessions of faith."

Conference and college leaders will continue to talk to constituency about the proposed federation over the next year.

CMC welcomed a new church in its 1997 sessions. Living Hope Christian Fellowship, Surrey, B.C., a cell church with about 40 members and almost 100 regular participants, joined CMC and the General Conference during the Winnipeg '97 sessions.

CMC also gave special recognition to Lawrence Klippenstein, retiring as archivist and director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, who has served in the position since 1974.

Delegates passed five resolutions. Among them was one expressing the conference's resolve to keep Native concerns a priority issue. Another dealt with a recent move to severely limit freedom of conscience and religion in Russia. It asks the Canadian government to use its influence to urge Russian president Boris Yeltsin to continue to veto such legislation.

Music highlighted the 95th sessions, from the "buskers" who performed for people waiting in meal lines to vigorous congregational singing under the leadership of Marilyn Houser Hamm, Altona, Man., to the CMBC alumni choir assembled for the 50th anniversary celebration. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

A singing celebration for CMBC

Melanie Zuercher

Winnipeg—Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) celebrated its 50th anniversary July 5-6 with an alumni barbeque, a concert and a ceremony that concluded the Conference of Mennonites in Canada sessions, which began July 3.

The concert Saturday evening featured an 80-voice alumni choir, with three former and current music teachers at CMBC—Bernie Neufeld (pictured left), George Wiebe and Rudy Schellenberg—conducting.

Three pieces had been commissioned especially for the event. The composers were Audrey Falk Janzen ('91), Rosthern, Sask.; Leonard Enns ('60), Waterloo, Ont., and Esther Wiebe, who retires this year after 43 years teaching at CMBC.

To begin the Sunday afternoon ceremony, former presidents, board members and professors marched in and placed 50 red roses in a vase. Neufeld, Wiebe and Schellenberg conducted an alumni choir and the congregation in 10 anthems and hymns.

CMBC president John H. Neufeld introduced Arnold Regier, Newton, Kan., CMBC's first president, plus others connected with the college's beginning.

Rodney Sawatsky, a CMBC alumnus and president of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., gave the address on the afternoon's theme, "One Generation to Another."

He said that CMBC has been a moderating force among competing theological views of Mennonites and has established a mediating position in the culture wars of North America.

While he affirmed CMBC's "ethnic familial ties," which "unite us across generations," he warned that these "can leave us feeling self-satisfied and limit our outreach."

Sawatsky called on "this generation [to] make amends for the divisions of generations past." ***Gordon Houser***

The *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* has been translated into Dutch, German, Vietnamese and Laotian. French and Spanish translations are in process. Currently 27,500 copies of the English language edition have been printed since the first printing in 1995.

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World Press Review **reports that a member of the Australian Parliament said recently that he fears "the yellow peril will rule the world, because they have a different culture and a different way of life." A subsequent poll found 48 percent of Australians agreed with those sentiments. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)**

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Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference (PSMC) met June 20-22 at First Mennonite Church in San Francisco. Worship included Indonesian dance, traditional hymns, plus music, Scripture and prayer in three languages. Jeff Wright, conference minister for southern California, presented statistics on the 26 churches he oversees: They contain about 1,500 members; one in five are white, one in 10 have Mennonite parents, most worship in languages other than English. In business sessions, projections for the new fiscal year indicate a 28 percent budget cut. Delegates approved keeping the three half-time conference ministers at current salary levels. The rest of PSMC's budget will be cut to meet projected income. In other business, PSMC welcomed Iglesia Amor Viviente, Fresno, as an associate member. Delegates approved a draft statement, "Global Mission Resolution," with the stipulation that some rewording be done. "The statement affirms the reality for [PSMC] that global mission starts at our front door and that our leadership training has global implications," said conference minister Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower. The next PSMC assembly will be in Phoenix in January 1998. (*Sharon Britton Miller*)

COMMENTARY

Chinese church welcomes home 'native son'

Editor's note: *David Ewert was born in Puyang (then Kai Chow), China, on Sept. 18, 1933, to August and Martha Ewert, serving there as General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) missionaries. The family left China in 1941. David first returned to Puyang in November 1988. At that time the government had not returned the church to the congregation, and David met no one he knew from the past. In fall 1996, David and his wife, Karen, returned to China with China Educational Exchange to teach English at Luoyang Institute of Technology and in February of this year they made the visit to Puyang described below. CEE is an inter-Mennonite agency, of which the GC Commission on Overseas Mission is one partner.*

Puyang—To the sound of cymbal and drum and preceded by a video camera, we filed into Puyang Church. More than 500 people rose and clapped us to the platform. I had been amused, even a little cynical about the fuss, but the sight of so many people brought tears, prompted by a mix of personal and family memories.

All this to welcome home a native son. My family had last worshiped here in spring 1941, probably with a similar gathering of Chinese Christians who had come to say farewell to several missionary families returning to the United States.

As an adult I have often been critical of that mission past, finding fault with its unaware imperialism and cultural chauvinism. Now I saw that despite human frailty, God had planted a church, and the present gathering wanted to celebrate a past I symbolized. I was moved by the awareness that many of these middle-aged and older people had missed schooling, lost jobs, faced public humiliation and, in some cases, been imprisoned and tortured because of their association with Mennonite missionaries.

The congregations gave us scrolls adorned with ancient Chinese characters, reminiscent of the farewell wall-hanging given my parents in 1941. When I was invited to speak, I recalled my last time there as a boy of 7. Later we mingled with seniors who had personal experience with the mission. The service finally concluded with Psalm 23 sung at my request to a Chinese melody I had learned as a child.

Afterward, the director of the churches in Puyang hosted us. He said all senior leaders in the Puyang churches come from "Mennonite" families, and claimed that all 39 registered Protestant congregations in the Puyang area have their roots in the Puyang Mennonite Church. Their hymnbook and members' instruction manual are versions of material the Mennonites developed.

One change from the Mennonite past was that today the lay pastor of the congregation is a woman in her 60s. The director said Puyang churches have their own member- and leadership-training programs. Formal requirements are strict—two years of church attendance and several courses in Bible and doctrine before baptism, and further courses and experience before leadership.

In the late afternoon, we returned to the church neighborhood and walked around, identifying mission landmarks: the middle school, the abandoned hospital, the Bible school and two former missionary residences.

We concluded the evening with a stroll through the Puyang County Lantern Festival. Appropriately, high overhead floated a gigantic dragon watching this "prodigal son" who had returned to his birthplace. The morning's experience had reminded me of an even higher watchful eye. *David Ewert*

MCC photo supplied by David Ewert

Roots: *David Ewert was born in Puyang, China, to Mennonite missionaries who left in 1941. He recently returned to China as a teacher with China Educational Exchange and is shown with childhood friends at the Puyang church.*

The 61st annual Indiana Mennonite Women's Missionary Rally will be held Oct. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind. The theme is "Our Global Family." Indiana women from the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church, Evangelical Mennonite Church, Beachy Amish, Brethren in Christ, Conservative Mennonite and unaffiliated Mennonite churches are invited. For more information contact Jeannette Bechtel, 66583 CR 31, Goshen, IN 46528; (219) 642-3924.

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Michael Lichtenberger, former controller for Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., appeared in Harvey County District Court July 11 on forgery and theft charges. Lichtenberger was fired from Bethel in late June after auditors found irregularities. He has been accused of forging a college check to himself for more than $23,000. A civil suit alleges that Lichtenberger stole more than $50,000 from the college. While the college did not instigate the criminal investigation, they are committed to full cooperation with authorities. Doug Penner, Bethel College president, stated that the theft of funds from the college will not affect scholarships, financial aid or daily operations. (*The Newton Kansan* and Bethel College)

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The recent name change of Zaire to Democratic Republic of Congo has caused some rapid correcting at Ten Thousand Villages. The self-help group had just sent out promotional packets to about 75 U.S. stores publicizing new crafts from Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Zaire. Ten Thousand Villages media coordinator Larry Guengerich had to rewrite and distribute corrected material for the packets, changing the name Zaire to Congo. "It's pretty hard to get stuff out of countries that are falling apart," says Guengerich. "Just the fact that we can export stuff from [Congo] to the United States is some sort of miracle." (*Mennonite Weekly Review* and *MCC News Service*)

Bruce Sheasby, pastor of Parkview United Church in Vauxhall, Alta., is also an Elvis impersonator. For Canada Day (July 1), Sheasby and others planned an "International Elvis Gospel Festival" at the church, reports *The Observer*. Sheasby, "a sincere Elvis fan and sincere Christian," notes that Elvis learned to sing in church and recorded several gospel songs. (*ChristianWeek*)

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Traffic jams in Bangkok are so bad that cabbies and traffic police are being trained to help women deliver their babies. Women trying to get to the hospitals in Bangkok give birth to an estimated 300 to 400 babies each year in taxis and "tuk-tuks" (three-wheeled, open-sided taxis). Two years ago, one city hospital began to send nurses by motorcycle to stranded motorists, but often the only available care-givers are the taxi drivers and traffic cops. (*The Wichita Eagle*)

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Two congregations in the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church have had their voting privileges revoked because of their stance on homosexuality. The two congregations, Southside Mennonite Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind., and Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., are also members of the General Conference Mennonite Church. They were informed by letter that their delegates will not be allowed to vote at conference sessions for two years. The Southside church has accepted as a member a gay man who is in a committed relationship; Assembly is working on the issue for seven years to try to come to consensus on biblical passages on homosexuality. (*Gospel Herald*)

A garden bears fruit

CHURCH
MENN

Arvada, Colo. (GCMC)—When members of Arvada Mennonite Church offered their church grounds for a Hmong gardening project in the early 1980s, they didn't dream what it would lead to 15 years later. On June 8, nine Hmong church leaders, followed by a procession of people, placed a new sign next to the existing Arvada church sign. The procession was part of the charter worship service for the new Hmong Mennonite congregation in Arvada. More than 100 people listened to pastor and church planter Shoua Moua's welcome and message. Steve Goering, Colorado area conference minister for Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, led in commissioning nine people as leaders of the new Hmong congregation, which is an initiative of Western District, Arvada Mennonite Church, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference of the Mennonite Church, the GC Commission on Home Ministries and the Denver-area Mennonite churches. Following the service, members of the new congregation served a feast of Hmong foods to the guests. *Marilyn Miller*

Youth go 'overseas' to find mission at home

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Thirty youth "went to Africa" earlier this year for the sake of mission education.

The youth were members of youth groups from four Newton Mennonite churches who field-tested a new curriculum guide and video designed to promote understanding and enthusiasm among youth for mission.

The 50-page curriculum guide, dubbed "Passport," and the video, entitled "What? Me? Mission?," will be released this summer by the Mission Education Reference Council, says Jeannie Zehr, secretary of mission communications for the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church, and "Passport" coordinator.

"The guide and video will be packaged together and distributed free to all congregations in the Mennonite Church and General Conference that have youth groups," Zehr says.

"The goal of the materials is to show youth that mission is something they can do right now where they are, as well as something they can do when they've finished school. The word 'mission' is often associated with going overseas, but we want them to see it's an ongoing part of life," she says.

World Vision's 30-hour famine package was one of the models at which the "Passport" curriculum committee looked when it began development of mission education materials designed especially for Mennonite youth, says Ritch Hochstetler, associate pastor of Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

"It's more than just a video or one curriculum piece," he says. "It's meant to be used in a variety of ways. It's flexible because youth culture changes so fast."

Rusty Bonham, minister of high school youth at First Mennonite Church, Newton, was one of four pastors participating in the field test of the "Passport" curriculum and video in March. Youth from First, Faith, Bethel College and Shalom churches took part in a six-hour event.

"I felt very positive about the day," Bonham says. "The kids responded really well. The hardest thing about something like this is getting kids to show up in the first place. We tried to keep it mysterious, telling them only the title, 'Go to Africa.' We're going to go to Africa on Sunday, that's all I told them." *Cynthia Snider*

After the war, violence remains in Guatemala

Guatemala City (MCC)—Most of the colorful carnations strewn on the floor went unnoticed and were trampled underfoot. Then, as the day-long, first-of-its-kind conference on healing family violence in Guatemala drew to a close, the speaker asked every person to pick up a flower, remembering a woman who had been abused.

Attenders prayerfully placed wilted flowers representing battered women into a water-filled vase at the altar of Casa Horeb Mennonite Church where the conference was being held. "Rape," "beatings," "incest"—the softly spoken words named the horrors endured by the women the flowers symbolized.

As the stems sucked up the water, a small miracle occurred. The flowers revived, helping represent the promise of healing that is also possible in human lives.

About half the 60 to 70 people attending "Mujeres hacia la Sanidad" ("Women moving toward health") on May 31 were Mennonites. Some attenders worked for social service agencies in Guatemala City. All had a common goal: to learn more about abuse and find ways to help suffering women and children.

Discussing domestic abuse is new in Guatemala. Although the country's 36 years of armed conflict ended with peace accords in December 1996, there is now growing awareness that violence remains, including within families. Many Guatemalans have learned to view violence as the answer in difficult situations.

"One big scar of war is that it has taken from us the forms we used to have, such as talking, to resolve our problems," says Olga Piedrasanta de Azurdia, an organizer of the conference.

Ruth Krall, a Goshen (Ind.) College professor, one of several North Americans at the conference, says studies show an apparent correlation between countries that have experienced war and increased abuse of women and children.

Another cause of family violence in Guatemala is widespread poverty that can create feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness, and in turn increase violence, especially when people seek escape through alcohol. This is often true within Guatemala's 22 indigenous groups, whose communities tend to be the poorest.

Maria Elena Ca'al was one of six Kekchi Mennonites—all leaders of women's groups—who made the four-hour bus ride to attend the conference. In her community, Ca'al reports "fighting, beating and putting the women down with words, not respecting each other like the word of God says."

Many Kekchi are still reluctant to discuss abuse, fearing they will embarrass their families. Ca'al is hopeful, however. "I think as I study and share what I've learned, women will have the confidence to talk about their problems and I'll be able to help," she says.

During a panel discussion, Guatemalan women listened intently as a U.S. lawyer told how "protection from abuse" laws in the United States keep batterers away from their victims. Guatemala recently passed a family protection law but has yet to implement it.

Another panel member, a Guatemalan social worker, said Guatemala City has only one shelter that can serve as a refuge for battered women and their children.

At the end of a long, emotional day, organizers read the conference evaluations and were glad to note interest in future educational events.

"The desire for follow-up," says Piedrasanta de Azurdia, "is a confirmation from God that now is the right time to address domestic abuse." *Pearl Sensenig*

Mark Beach

Small miracle: *Participants in a first-of-its-kind conference on healing family violence in Guatemala take part in a ritual of naming abuse endured by women, while adding a flower to a vase.*

James S. Wall, editor of *Christian Century*, has asked CBS to apologize for a segment it ran on the Bruderhof March 27. The segment, shown on the show *48 Hours*, ran along with one on the Heaven's Gate cult; the implication, Wall contended, was that the Bruderhof is also a cult. Wall said the broadcast was "a distorted and shameful display of an anti-religious bias." (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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College or graduate students pursuing careers in mental health fields are invited to apply to the Elmer Ediger Memorial Scholarship Fund. Scholarships of between $1,000 and $1,200 are available to students in Canada and the United States. Four to six students receive scholarships yearly. Those applying need at least a 3.25 college grade average, to be a U.S. and/or Canadian citizen or permanent resident, and must be a member of a Mennonite Central Committee constituent church. Applications and supporting data must be sent in by Feb. 1, 1998. For applications write to Amy Herr, Mennonite Health Services, 2160 Lincoln Highway East, Box 6, Lancaster, PA 17602-1150; (717) 293-7125.

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An amendment containing the Peace Tax Fund was rejected by the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee June 12. Supporters hoped to attach the amendment to a tax reconciliation bill. Georgia Representative John Lewis introduced the amendment with a plea for freedom of conscience; an official from the Joint Committee on Taxation listed "problems of proliferation" with the proposal. When a vote on the amendment was called, it was strongly put down. Ways and Means committee members received a letter supporting the amendment signed by 14 religious and peace organizations, including Mennonite Central Committee, Church Women United, the Baptist Joint Committee for Public Affairs and the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors. (*National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund*)

Students at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., became "persecuted Anabaptists" on the night of April 29, hiding under bridges in cold creek water, trying to reach any of 10 "safe houses" or "freedom" (the faculty-staff lounge). For two hours, more than 150 students and 50 college administrators, faculty and staff played the game "Persecution." Students were the Anabaptists; faculty and staff the persecutors. When students were caught, they were sent to jail; the jail soon rang with loud martyr songs. Dick Koontz, persecutor/financial aid director, appreciated how people interacted with others they wouldn't usually relate to. Says Koontz, "It was a community-building experience for all of us." (*Bethel College Bulletin*)

• • •

Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association met June 26-29 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. This year's conference theme was, "A Call to Healing: Our Ongoing Anabaptist Stories." Frances and Lawrence Greaser of Newton, Kan, told how they nursed their son David as he died of AIDS. Frances Greaser is a nurse and the author of *And a Time to Die*, which chronicles this journey. Participants also celebrated the 50th anniversary of Mennonite Medical Association. Susan Martens Kehler was named MNA Nurse of the Year. Kehler spent 20 years (between 1957 and 1980) in Taiwan with the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission. While there, she began a nursing school at Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hualien. Glen Brubaker was named Mennonite Medical Association doctor of the year for his work on leprosy control, HIV infection and other public health issues in Tanzania over the past 29 years. The next MMA/MNA convention will be in Colorado Springs, June 25-28, 1998.

Widening the circle

Roma Quapp

Winnipeg (CMC)—On May 25 some 40 people gathered in Riverton, Man., north of Winnipeg, to take part in a groundbreaking and site dedication ceremony for the Riverton Fellowship Circle's new church building. The fellowship is associated with Native Ministries of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Here, Neill von Gunten helps Carrie Jacobson with the shovel as Edith von Gunten (left) and Bernie Potoski look on. The von Guntens are Native Ministries pastoral workers in Riverton.

The ceremony reflected the group's Native roots. Terry Widrick, a Native pastoral worker, began a reflection time with a prayer flute song. Following words from the fellowship's chair and the Riverton council representative, Lawrence Hart, a Cheyenne peace chief and Mennonite pastor from Clinton, Okla., blessed the site by calling all those who come to it from the four directions to be blessed by the Spirit of God. The indoor church service included greetings from other communities in Manitoba and elsewhere in Canada and the United States, where individuals and congregations have made both large and small donations to the fellowship's fund-raising efforts.

Construction of the new church building was scheduled to begin at the end of June. Volunteers are welcome for all phases of construction. ***Roma Quapp***

FLP names new editorial director

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The Commission on Education of the General Conference Mennonite Church announces the appointment of Byron Rempel-Burkholder as editorial director for Faith & Life Press.

Rempel-Burkholder, currently of Edmonton, Alta., replaces Susan E. Janzen, who will be attending Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in the fall.

Rempel-Burkholder, who has a B.A. in English from York University, Toronto, and an M.A. in New Testament from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif., most recently served as Alberta provincial editor for *Mennonite Reporter* and as pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, Edmonton, which disbanded at the end of 1996. He was also interim pastor at Arnaud (Man.) Mennonite Church in 1992.

Other experience includes a stint as a student resource person in Zaire under Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services and four years as communications director for MBM/S.

Byron Rempel-Burkholder

He and his wife, Melita, have two children, Hannah, 5, and Joel, 4.

"This is an exciting era to be working in publication of educational and other material in the church," says Rempel-Burkholder. "Society is changing and so are our conferences and our denominations. The challenge is to speak to the current generation in new ways, with new languages and new technologies."

Record

AMBS—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
MMA—Mennonite Mutual Aid

DEATHS

Donald D. Wenger, Akron (Pa.) Church, a volunteer in MCC's Ten Thousand Villages warehouse in Akron, Pa., died unexpectedly of heart failure July 1. He and his wife, Ferne, had volunteered at Ten Thousand Villages since September 1993.

Wenger

MINISTERS

Rudy Froese is ending as pastor at Rosthern (Sask.) Church. He will be conference pastor for the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan beginning Oct. 1.

Steve Goering is quarter-time Colorado area conference minister for the Western District Conference. He continues to co-pastor Boulder (Colo.) Church.

Tig Intagliata has resigned as pastor at San Antonio (Texas) Church effective Aug. 15. He will be associate pastor at Trinity Church, Glendale, Ariz.

Richard Kinson is resigning from Grace Church, Enid, Okla., in December.

Paul M. Lederach is interim pastor for Zion Church, Souderton, Pa.

WORKERS

Maria Boehm, St. Jacobs (Ont.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC term in Thompson, Man., as a peace/mediation education and caseworker.

Diana Marcela Carvajal, First Church, Nappanee, Ind., is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program as a pastoral assistant with Comunidad de Fe Church, Chicago.

Alma Chavez, Comunidad de Fe Church, Chicago, is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program, working with Chicago Opportunity for Peace and Action.

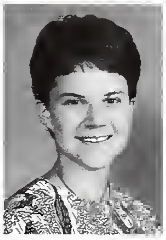
Farida Djaelani is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program at Jemaat Kristen Indonesian Hosana Church in Upland, Calif.

Melanie Djaelani is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program at Jemaat Kristen Indonesian Hosana Church in Upland, Calif.

Marcus Heinrichs, West Abbotsford (B.C.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC term in Akron, Pa., as a printer.

Leah Mullet Hershberger and **Paul Hershberger**, Trinity Church, Glendale, Ariz., are beginning three-year MCC terms in Nicaragua as environmental education promoters.

Francie Irizarry-Hernandez, Christ Community Mennonite Church, Schaumburg, Ill., is beginning a two-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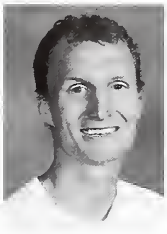
Heinrichs

L. Hershberger

P. Hershberger

Irizarry-Hernandez

Janzen

Linscheid

Ediger

Linsenmeyer

Schaaf

The Southern Baptist Church voted at its June 18 convention to boycott Walt Disney, including theme parks and the ABC television network, owned by Disney. Church members are protesting Disney's policies and programs that they say favor homosexual rights. The "Disney resolution" also encourages Baptists to stop patronizing "any company that promotes immoral ideologies." (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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A children's book of biographies of religious leaders has been recalled by publisher Simon & Schuster after complaints by Muslim leaders. The book, *Great Lives: World Religions*, described the prophet Mohammed as "a man who … took pleasure in seeing the heads of his enemies torn from their bodies by the swords of his soldiers. He hated Christians and Jews, poets and painters and anyone who criticized him." Simon & Schuster has agreed to recall the more than 4,000 outstanding copies. They have also agreed that the chapter on Mohammed is inflammatory and has inaccuracies, and they will work with the Council on American-Islamic Relations to revise it. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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***Die Mennonitische Post*, a Steinbach, Man.-based German language newspaper that links Mennonites in seven countries, celebrates its 20th year of publication this year. The *Post* was started by Mennonite Central Committee Canada to provide a link among Mennonites and serve as a literacy and education tool in Latin America. Now, about half the 5,000 subscribers live in Latin America, including Mexico, Bolivia, Argentina, Belize and Paraguay. In these countries, most German-speaking Mennonite children quit school at the ages of 12 to 14 and have weak reading skills and limited access to reading material. Stories are published that give readers a better understanding of health and family issues and their Mennonite heritage and faith.**

Bishop Michael Cox has created a special "pay-as-you-pray" telephone number for Catholics in Ireland. The number, similar to 900 numbers in North America, enables one to confess by long-distance. However, a spokesperson for the Irish bishops' conference claims that such confessions have "no sacramental value." (*The United Church Observer*)

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An index on Canadian aboriginal issues, reports *The Catalyst*, provides some sobering statistics:

- **A 16-year-old treaty Indian boy has a 70 percent chance of serving a prison sentence by age 25.**
- **A treaty aboriginal male has a 30 percent chance of finishing high school.**
- **The suicide rate for an aboriginal female youth is eight times higher than the Canadian average.**
- **Sixty percent of homes on aboriginal reserves lack running water, sewage disposal or electricity. (*Presbyterian Record*)**

• • •

Aboriginal church leaders in northern Canada are tackling abuse and suicide. Three Inuit men spent March and April snowmobiling along the eastern and western coasts of Hudson Bay to talk about suicide. The men set out March 3 on their 8,850-kilometer journey with sleds packed with caribou skins, saws for making igloos and other supplies. They visited 35 communities and received a snowmobile escort in Akulivik, Quebec, which had three suicides last year in a village of 400. Anglican bishop Gordon Beardy, Muskrat Dam, Ont., and others are on a "Sacred Walk for Healing." They are traveling through northwest Ontario and Manitoba to help end sexual and physical abuse in Canada's North. "You can't witness so much pain and do nothing," says Beardy. "This is something we all can do, everyone together." (*Christian-Week*)

year MCC term in Schaumburg as a regional associate/administrator for the MCC Great Lakes Office.

Catherine Jachin is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program at Jemaat Kristen Indonesian Imanuel Church in Downey, Calif.

Randall M. Jacobs is executive director of Mennonite Foundation and vice president of legal services for MMA.

Stephanie Janzen, Fort Garry Fellowship, Winnipeg, is beginning a three-year MCC term in Cairo, Egypt, as an English teacher.

Lawrence Klippenstein is retiring from his work at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg effective the end of August.

John L. Liechty is vice president of financial services for MMA.

Cynthia Linscheid, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., is marketing and sales assistant at Faith & Life Press. She replaces **Karen Ediger**, Bethel College Church, who will be attending AMBS in the fall.

Bek Linsenmeyer, Hoffnungsau Church, Inman, Kan., has ended as editor of *Window*, the publication of Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Diandra Littlewhiteman is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program with White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church, Busby, Mont.

J.B. Miller has ended as vice president of financial and legal services for MMA.

Matt Schaaf, Hope Fellowship, Winnipeg, is beginning a one-year MCC term in Winnipeg as a youth worker.

Christine Sindoro is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program at Jemaat Kristen Indonesian Hosana Church in Upland, Calif.

Pong Sixiengmay, First Church, Sugarcreek, Ohio, is serving with the MCC U.S. Summer Service Program as a camp counselor.

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Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open for the 1997-98 school year: **mathematics instructor** (full-time).

Send resumes or inquiries to **Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Rd., Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Accounting faculty: Starting August 1998, **Goshen College** seeks faculty member to teach undergraduate accounting courses. Qualified candidate will hold MBA/CPA or doctorate and possess significant professional experience. Tenure track position. Women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

For further information send resume to **Paul A. Keim, Academic Dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503; fax (219) 535-7060; e-mail pkeim@goshen.edu.** Applications welcomed through web site at **www.goshen.edu.**

Goshen College seeks applicants for two positions as **assistant directors of public relations**. The two positions will divide primary responsibilities in writing, editing and project management, with additional possibilities in photography and sports information; specific division of tasks is dependent on skills of the successful applicants. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree; organizational, writing and verbal skills; ability to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines; and creative energy and the ability to work well in team situations. Some knowledge of graphic design and emerging technologies is a plus. Women and people from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and three references to **Lyle Miller, Interim Director of Public Relations, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535 7572;** fax **(219) 535-7670;** e-mail **lylegm@goshen.edu**; web site **www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be received until the positions are filled.

Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a **teacher** of the following subjects: **history, government, psychology, computer** and **physical education.** Coaching varsity girls' basketball, boys' basketball and assisting with track is required.

Send resume to: **Freeman Academy, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029.**

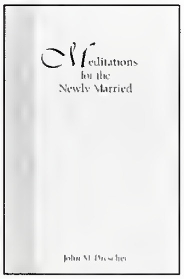
Urgent opening at **Mennonite Central Committee** headquarters: MCC is seeking applicants for the position of **administrative assistant for the Latin America/Caribbean department** in Akron, Pa. This is a two-year, full-time, salaried position available Sept. 1. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants should be fluent in both English and Spanish, have experience with office procedure skills and understand and respect the Latin American/Caribbean region.

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact **Prem Dick** or **Goldie Kuhns** at **MCC Personnel Department, 21 South 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151.** Applications due **Aug. 15.**

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the position of **co-director for Africa**, focusing on Southern Africa, Uganda and Tanzania. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position based in Akron, Pa. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants should be fluent in English, have social, economic, political and cultural knowledge of Africa and be willing to travel. A bachelor's degree is required and overseas experience preferred. Applications due **March 1, 1998.**

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact **Dwight McFadden** or **Sandra Franklin** at **MCC Personnel Department, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151,** e-mail **SLF@ mcc.org.**

Meditations for the Newly Married



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What to do?

Since *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald* plan to merge by Feb. 1, 1998 (see story on page 14 of our July 22 issue), what happens to your current subscription?

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—*Editor*

Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo won the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his support for independence of East Timor from Indonesia. However, Belo says his prize has brought more suffering to East Timor, with more repression by Indonesian authorities. "The number of cases of arrests and torture among the youngest in the territory has increased," Reuters reports Belo saying. "Many were questioned, tortured and … imprisoned … just because they shouted, 'Long live the Nobel, long live Ximenes.'" (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Roman Catholic bishops in England and Wales have proposed that Western countries reduce or cancel debts (estimated at more than $1 trillion) owed by developing countries, reports ENI. A Catholic relief agency spearheading the effort claims that for every dollar Western countries give in aid, they take back three dollars on debt repayments for previous loans. "We believe," said the bishops, "that the start of the new millenium should be to give hope to impoverished people and to put behind us the past mistakes of lenders and borrowers." (*Gospel Herald*)

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The International Bible Society will not make any gender-related wording changes in future editions of the New Internation Version of the Bible. The proposed changes caused opposition among some readers of the version, which represents 45 percent of the Bibles circulated in North America. In an opinion piece in *World* magazine, Focus on the Family's James Dobson exhorted Bible translators to not "give in to feminist pressure to rewrite the Scriptures." Focus on the Family then convened a "Conference on Gender-related Language in Scripture," which issued guidelines for NIV publishers and translators. One of the guidelines was that "man" be used for human beings or the human race; also that "sons" not be changed to "children" or "sons and daughters." (*Mennonite Brethren Herald* and *ChristianWeek*)

Reviews

FILMS

SAGANISM

Contact, *written by James V. Hart and Michael Goldberg, produced by Robert Zemeckis and Steve Starkey, directed by Robert Zemeckis, rated PG*

Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editor

Anyone out there? *Jodie Foster uses high-tech equipment to listen for signals from outer space.*

Based on the novel by the late Carl Sagan, *Contact* looks at what might happen if Earth received signals from intelligent life beyond our solar system.

The film opens with a stunning sequence that takes viewers from a vista of the United States to an increasing distance from our planet, our solar system, our galaxy and beyond, showing the vastness and grandeur of space. In the background are sounds of radio signals that have been traveling away from Earth for decades. They fade into silence. This brilliant opening anticipates the movie's themes.

Jodie Foster plays a lonely, obsessed astronomer who lost her mother at birth and her father at age 10. She becomes a star-searcher, scouring the night sky for radio signals, for signs of life "out there." On the verge of losing the funding that allows her to use the U.S. government's expensive equipment, she hears a signal. This is one of several suspenseful, expertly done parts of the film.

Zemeckis, who won an Academy Award for *Forrest Gump*, enjoys piling up the tricks. Some work; others are overdone. He mixes shots of the actors with footage of President Clinton, and he fills the story with outlandish reactions from various groups at the news of possible intelligent life beyond Earth, with Christianity looking the worst.

Matthew McConaughey plays "a man of the cloth without the cloth" who becomes the president's personal guru and Foster's love interest. His character is a new age man in search of truth. He and Foster have an argument about the existence of God (unusual in a Hollywood film). Yet faith is caricatured as devoid of reason, while science is seen as reasonable yet unable to explain everything.

By the end, *Contact* devolves into a preachy presentation of Sagan's belief that, while the scientific evidence tells us there is no God (a faith he carried to his grave), there may be intelligent life out there, and seeking it is a noble pursuit that makes us better humans.

The film is by turns brilliant and silly. Foster is outstanding. It's refreshing to see a film that addresses spiritual questions, but it's too bad it does so in such a facile way.

BOOKS

CARE OF THE SOUL

SoulShaping, *by Douglas J. Rumford (Tyndale, 1996, 462 pages, $10.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Arthur Boers, Waterloo, Ont.

Douglas J. Rumford worries about the fact that we live in an era of "soul neglect," even though it is obvious that many people experience deep soul longings.

As a Presbyterian pastor, he wants to help people find ways to help their souls be shaped into the image of Christ. He defines spirituality accordingly: "Spirituality cares for the soul by cultivating a vital connection to the living Lord."

One of this book's strengths is that Rumford writes with a pastor's heart, obviously has given good counsel and spiritual direction over the years to a host of parishioners and tells a lot of good stories.

There is much about this book worth commending. Rumford makes a good case for spiritual disciplines as helping us develop our soul's reflexes. He considers many disciplines that too many evangelicals overlook, ignore or down-

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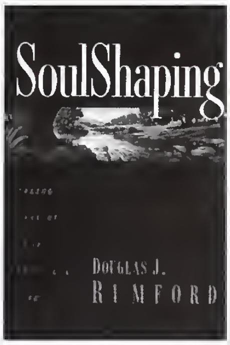
play: silence, meditation and confession, just to name a few.

But I will not end up using this book much. For one thing, it is too wordy, and Rumford has a passion for over-explaining.



For another, Rumford comes across matter-of-factly as a person with all the answers, and I found that off-putting.

For still another, this evangelical self-help manual is a little too narrowly preoccupied with the self. For example, I was glad to see a large section on worship but then disturbed when I saw how I-centered this section was: It largely dealt with what worship does for us.

Thus the book seemed to me very much like a mixed bag. I am pleased to see more evangelicals taking seriously classical spiritual disciplines and resources, but for my money and time I would still rather rely on the classics themselves.

TRUTH UNWRAPPED

Conflict or Connection: Interpersonal Relationships in Cross-Cultural Settings *by Levi Keidel (Evangelical Missions Information Service, 1996, 136 pages, $14.95 U.S./$17.95 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Mathew Swora, McPherson, Kan.

Today's mythology either places missionaries on pedestals of perfection and invulnerability or vilifies them as domineering, insensitive and colonialistic. Here, the truth is unwrapped and the perils and positives of missionary relationships are revealed honestly and compassionately.

Keidel writes for missionaries, their agencies and their friends, but there is much of benefit here for anyone who cares about relationships in God's realm, which are becoming increasingly cross-cultural and international. Among the issues Keidel discusses is the emerging trend of internationalization. Increasingly, missionary teams are including members from many different countries and continents, not just Europe or North America. Some will serve in North America. Keidel gives some practical and biblical guidelines for sorting through the cultural differences that can bedevil communication and relationships.

Keidel's style is personal to the point of surprising transparency. He also uses interviews and anecdotes from many other sources. He touches on more issues than can be explored in depth in one such volume, which may frustrate some readers looking for hard and fast rules, or for deeper discussion of such issues. But the cross-cultural worker in training has at least been made aware.

Many missionaries may wish they had been prepared with fewer grandiose, heroic illusions and more of the practical and concrete observations Keidel makes. After all, God's realm is all about relationships. Relationships with a missionary are, for many people, their first encounter with the gospel.

Resources

- **Healthy Living Series** is a set of materials on wellness education, for use by individuals or small groups. Available free to members of Mennonite Mutual Aid; others can participate for a nominal fee. Contact Educational Resources at MMA, 1-800-348-7468 or (219) 533-9511.
- **Voices of the Voiceless: Women, Justice and Human Rights in Guatemala** by Michelle Tooley (Herald Press, 1997, $14.99 U.S./$21.50 Cdn.) tells the stories of Guatemalan women, including Rigoberta Menchu, with theological reflection and political perspective.
- **Into the Past: Buildings of the Mennonite Commonwealth** by Rudy P. Friesen and Sergey Shmakin is an illustrated study of buildings left in the former Chortitza and Molotschna Mennonite colonies in the Ukraine. To order, contact Raduga Publications, 200-2033 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3J 0K8; (204) 885-9323; fax (204) 837-7235.
- **Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich** by Doris L. Bergen (University of North Carolina Press, 1996) looks at the German church under Hitler.
- **Up the Creek Without a Pastor: Reflections of a Congregation** is a collection of 18 sermons given by congregational members in a northern Manitoba church when it was between pastors. Published by Thompson United Mennonite Church, 365 Thompson Drive N., Thompson, MB R8N 1W2; $10 Cdn.
- **River Road: Essays on Manitoba and Prairie History** by Gerald Friesen (University of Manitoba Press, 1996) includes essays on Metis, Labour Party history, hockey and ethnic history.
- **A Prayer for the Earth: The Story of Naamah, Noah's Wife** by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Jewish Lights, 1997, hardcover, $16.95 U.S.) tells the story of how God called on Naamah to save each plant on earth; for ages 4 to 8.
- **A Little Child Shall Lead Them: Hopeful Parenting in a Confused World** by Johann Christoph Arnold (Plough, 1997, $10 U.S.) is a sequel to Arnold's (of the Bruderhof) *A Plea for Purity*.
- **Leading Your Church Through Conflict and Reconciliation**, edited by Marshall Shelly (Bethany House, 1997, $19.99 U.S.), includes 30 chapters from authors such as Speed Leas, Chuck Swindoll and Stuart Briscoe.
- **With an Eye on the Future: Development and Mission in the 21st Century**, edited by Duane Elmer and Lois McKinney (MARC, 1997, $24.95 U.S.), looks at theological education, global mission, international development and church leadership and renewal.
- **Walk Together Children** is a guide that helps congregations form interracial partnerships in their communities. Available from Baptist Peace Fellowship, (704) 456-1881; e-mail bpfna@primeline.com.
- **The World of Work: A Look at Employed Work in the Light of Faith**, and **Civic Responsibility: Do I Dare Make a Difference** are resources for small-group study. Available for $1.95 U.S. from Renew International, (908) 769-5400; e-mail renew@eclipse-intl.org.
- **The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom** by Henri J.M. Nouwen (Doubleday, 1996, $18.95 U.S.), the author's final book, is a "secret journal" written during a difficult period of Nouwen's life.

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Editorial

What's at stake

In looking back at Winnipeg '97, this issue of *The Mennonite* calls us to face the future. Our church obviously considers its youth a major stake in that future. We would likely say we value equally those a bit older, classified "young adults," from college age through the mid-30s. I got the impression young adults at Winnipeg, unlike the youth, were disappointed with the activities planned for them.

More like lack of activities. They did get the lunch with church leaders, including Integration Committee members, that they'd been promised, and Tent B was packed to capacity despite a cold wind barreling rudely through it. But none of the promised social events (automatically part of the youth convention) panned out—the settings where young adults from all over North America have a chance to start building ties with those alongside whom they'll presumably be working to help lead the church of the 21st century. And when someone asked what's being planned for young adult ministry in the new denomination, none of the leaders had an answer.

Economics: One major reason there are so few young adults at conference is economics. Youth are there because their church has paid their way, directly and/or by giving them a lot of help raising the money. Pastors, leaders and staff (mostly people in their 40s, 50s and 60s) are there because they're getting paid by their employers—it's their job. Seniors are there, often as delegates, because they have the time and the income to spare. What about young adults? They generally have jobs they can't afford to leave, especially if they have to pay for transportation, lodging and food in the bargain.

Are there members out there who are retired or have well-established incomes who, when called by their congregations to be delegates to denominational assemblies, will say, "Thanks for your trust in me, but instead of going myself I'd like to pay [or help pay, with a challenge to the congregation to come up with the rest] for a young adult to go instead"? Are there area conferences willing to budget substantial subsidies—more than just a token—for young adult delegates?

Perhaps another reason for young adults' low turnout at conference has to do with their distance from the church in general, probably because of their particular stage of life. Young adults, especially those who've been raised in the church, need to get out for a while, away from the church. A different vantage point can be crucial to helping young adults recognize and decide to hold onto what's valuable in their heritage and their faith upbringing.

Young adults who choose to come to conference are those who have also chosen the church. They are the ones committed to moving with the church into the new millenium. If the church is as committed to them as it says it is, it needs to make young adult ministry a priority and conferences more young adult-friendly.

Deeper challenge: There's an even deeper challenge. Some relatives who live in Indiana visited me recently. They attend a church that is part of Indiana-Michigan Conference (Mennonite Church). Sure enough, the topic of homosexuality came up (see the clip on page 16). My 17-year-old cousin had been flopped on the couch reading a magazine, apparently bored with the conversation. Then she got up to go downstairs, and as she passed through the adults, she said, "I think this is all just stupid. Who cares if someone's homosexual? Leave the judgment up to God."

Is she an unusual Mennonite youth? I expect she's fairly typical. The issues that tie our conferences in knots and give our leaders ulcers just aren't issues to her generation—or to the young adults who are only a few years older, or to many of the urban congregations that attract young adults who have gone out into the world to take a look around. Racial and class isolation, an uncertain economic future and environmental deterioration make the 21st century look like an increasingly fearful place. Young people are searching—sometimes desperately—for unconditional love, acceptance, community, a spiritual center. Sexual orientation and other aspects of people's personal history seem pretty minor to them.

It gives me hope to think that my cousin, her peers and the young adults who cared enough to come to Winnipeg could be the budding leaders of the church. I pray the church doesn't shut them out before they have a chance to flower. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

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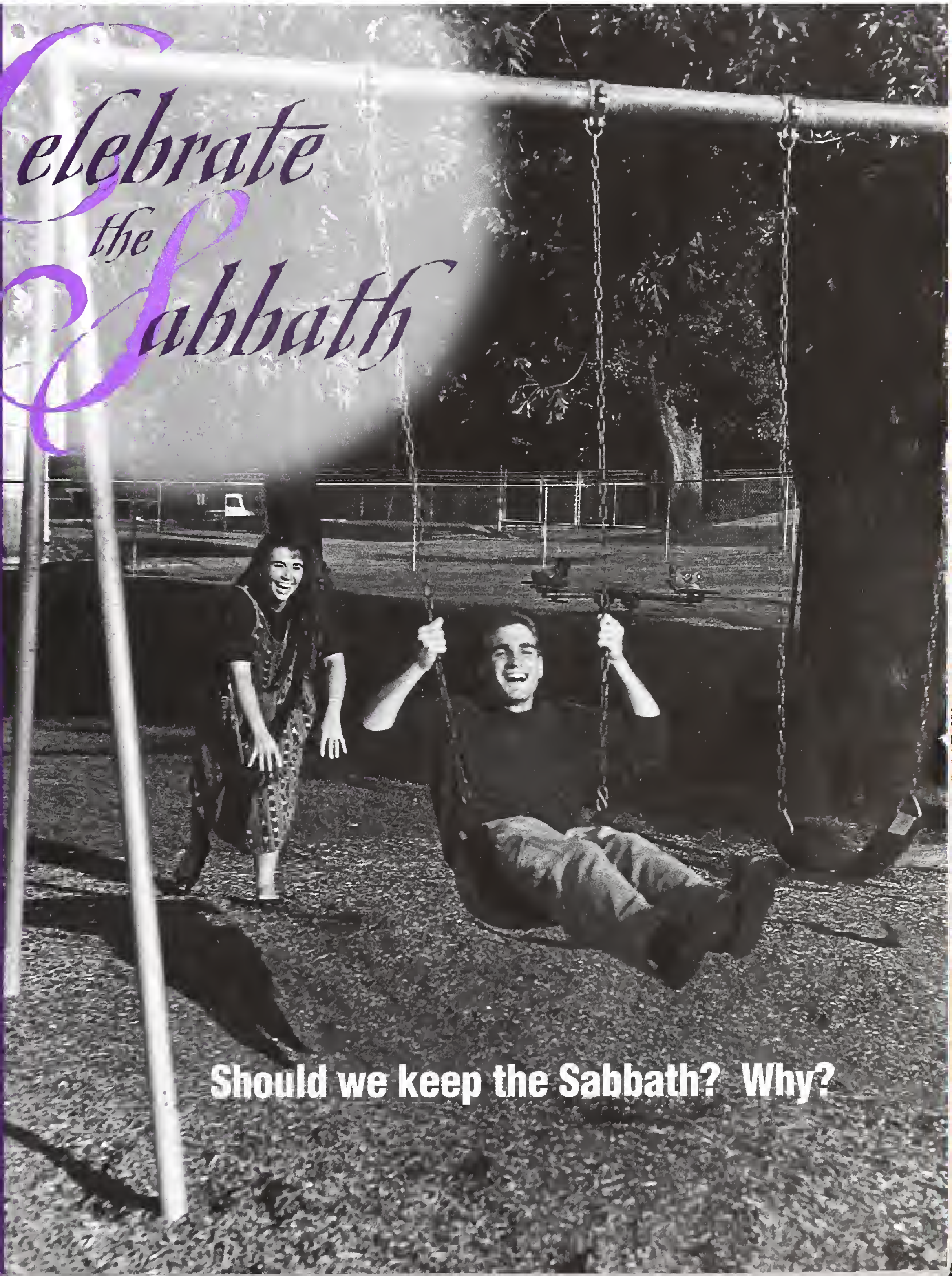
THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 16
AUGUST 26, 1997



Celebrate the Sabbath

Should we keep the Sabbath? Why?

- A temple in time (page 3)
- Why so many oxen in the pit? (page 7)
- Human being, not human doing (page 8)

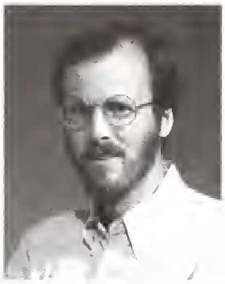
Prologue

Our family recently returned from a vacation trip to Germany, where we stayed with friends in two locations. Although we felt bone tired most nights from much walking and making our way in a different environment and a different language, the trip felt like a Sabbath to me.

I cannot comment knowledgeably on Germans, but among my impressions are that people there are less compulsive about how they act. We saw few people jogging, yet we saw less obesity than in North America. Many people bike and walk. And meals seemed more leisurely, less frenetic than our own often are.

I returned refreshed, renewed in my desire to be less busy, more mindful in what I do, and to rest and celebrate at least one day a week, with my family.

Keeping the Sabbath has not received much attention among Mennonites. In this issue we give it some, in the hope that it will stimulate you to think more about how to obey God's command to "keep the Sabbath holy" and find creative ways of doing that. Let us know what you think.



Our columnists Denise Preller (page 10) and Marlene Kropf (page 11) address the Sabbath theme, while J.B. Miller (page 12) looks at the stock market.

We pray that your summer has been refreshing. May we all find renewal as we seek to keep the Sabbath holy. *gh*

Next issue: To teach is to learn

Cover: Photo by Dale D. Gehman

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General Conference Mennonite Church

A temple in time

The art of keeping the seventh day is the art of painting on the canvas of time the mysterious grandeur of the creation.
—Abraham Joshua Heschel,
The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man

Willard M. Swartley

Sabbath invites us to celebrate God's love for humanity.

Should we Christians keep the Sabbath? Is Sabbath observance and celebration an essential part of our faith and practice? Yes, provided we avoid legalism and embrace Lord's Day celebrations.

As Marva Dawn puts it in her excellent book *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, Sabbath means for Christians "ceasing, resting, embracing, feasting." These four dimensions of meaning head her four main sections and chapters. By *ceasing* from work we direct ourselves to God, the mysterious, sovereign Being who transcends time, and repent of our failures to trust God by anxiously securing our own future. In *resting* we are liberated from the energy drain of work, invited to rely on God's grace and be renewed by God's holiness and love. Through *embracing* we apply the truths of our faith to our lives, accepting and affirming God's values and the victory of Jesus Christ for our benefit. *Feasting*, a metaphor for kingdom reality, awakens our joy and eschatological hope. In short, Sabbath reminds us that we are not our own

CLEO Photography

Celebrating the time of the Sabbath by ceasing, resting, embracing and feasting frees us from our tendency to be enslaved by possessions and our management of the world.

but belong to Another, our Creator and Redeemer. Sabbath is the ground of stewardship, stewardship the fruit of the Sabbath.

Dawn suggests that the Sabbath commandment is pivotal to all the Ten Commandments and that our laxity about the Sabbath results in laxity on the others as well: stealing, killing, lying, adulterating and coveting. In fact, keeping the Sabbath provides the moral undergirding for personal and societal wholeness.

The sawdust trail: If this is true, with even a 50 percent correlation, many of us Mennonites had better hit the sawdust trail, repent of and confess our sins. Many of us do not honor the Sabbath. In reacting to the Sabbath legalisms of our parents we have abandoned the spiritual discipline of committing ourselves to any significant Sabbath observance. Vacation, especially during the summer, is more formative than is Sabbath in our choices of what we do on Sunday. Further, we cite Jesus' words that "Sabbath was made for humans" to justify doing what militates against the true purpose of Sabbath: to renew human life and foster our relationship to God in holiness and love. Most Christians today are not Pharisees on this point but Gentiles who either do not know or ignore God's Sabbath provisions.

Two decades ago, in his article "The Portable Sabbath: Why Americans Have Turned to Meditation," Harvey Cox suggested that the loss of Sabbath observance provided the catalyst for tens of thousands of Americans turning to meditation and spiritual direction from a guru, an Eastern "religious master."

One might ask whether the current widespread interest in and hunger for spirituality is simply another soul cry for Sabbath lost. We search for new ways to nourish ourselves spiritually. But as Dawn points out, much of this has lost the corporate communal nature of spirituality the Sabbath provided and protected. This does not mean that solitude is not necessary and important. It is, but the communal experience of Sabbath in ceasing, resting, embracing and feasting has public significance and consequence on the moral and social solidarity, identity and witness of God's people.

Much current literature on spirituality appeals to Sabbath for a theological basis for dedicating times to the nourishment of the spiritual life. Whether one keeps one day as holy or not, the principle of setting time aside for finding peace within oneself and with God is necessary. Humans cannot live by bread alone; they need Sabbath time to be whole. Tilden Edwards, in *Sabbath Time*, points us in this direction. He cites four factors in American life that have put Sabbath observance in decline: pluralism, individualism, changing views of time and devaluing the contemplative experience of God. He calls Christian churches to honor the Day, and believers to a new appreciation of the deeper values of Sabbath observance: letting go of work; appreciating, not just managing, life; building community; worship that unites us with God and the church universal, and renewal for ministry.

Anti-idolatry: Hear Abraham Heschel's provocative word, from his profound reflections in *The Sabbath*: "What we are depends upon what the Sabbath is to us." The two most potent religious forces shaping and sustaining Jewish identity through all these centuries has been commitment to anti-idolatry and Sabbath observance. In recent years, Christians have done poorly on both counts. Dawn helps us see that Sabbath laxity is connected with our basic attitudes about time, stewardship, ethics, peace, hope and joy, as well as to our emotional, social and spiritual health.

Sabbath reminds us that we are not our own but belong to Another, our Creator and Redeemer.

Of the 28 insightful and spiritually renewing chapters of Dawn's passionate call to keep the Sabbath "wholly," her reminder that the Sabbath calls us to cease possessiveness and remember God's values is most profound. Drawing on Heschel, Dawn says that while for six days human energy is focused on space and things, the Sabbath declares to humans that God created time. Celebrating the time of the Sabbath by ceasing, resting, embracing and feasting frees us from our tendency to be enslaved by possessions and our management of the world. When on the Sabbath we cut ourselves free from striving and possessing, we give ourselves time to embrace God and allow God to embrace us in worship, Christian fellowship and renewal of our body, mind and spirit.

Sabbath witnesses to God's presence in time, as Heschel writes, "For where can the likeness of God be found? There is no quality that space has in common with the essence of God. There is not enough freedom on the top of the mountain; there is not enough glory in the silence of the sea. Yet the likeness of God can be found in time, which is eternity in disguise."

Sabbath is a temple in time, not a date but an atmosphere uniting God and humanity in memory and hope, in rest and joy.

Through Sabbath we also remember God's values as gift and guidance for

Jim Whitmer

our lives. In Sabbath-Lord's Day worship we adore God's majesty, remember who God is and celebrate Jesus Christ's salvation for us in his life, death and resurrection. We fellowship with others who seek the mind of Christ. We take time to examine our desires, to repent of and confess our sins and thus put our lives in renewed and new perspective. We not only remember God, but God remembers us, hears our cries and administers balm to our souls.

A good Sabbath celebrates what Jubilee signifies: release from oppression and overcoming social barriers created by race and class, economics and politics. The Sabbath is grounded not only in creation but in God's deliverance of the covenant people from slavery with the manifesto that in Israel and through the Sabbath, all stand before God equally (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). Gender and status discriminations yield to the new creation that God is working through Sabbath and Jubilee provisions. Sabbath is not about legalistic "can't do" rules but invites us to celebrate God's marvelous love for humans to recreate worn-down people into the vibrant, worshiping, communing and awesome image of God.

Resolves: I have made these new resolves about my Sabbath-keeping on Sunday:

1. To cease from my office work and all that marks my regular routine of work;

2. To rest, in the sense of finding stillness in my soul, together with physical and spiritual renewal for six days of work;

3. To embrace the beauty of God's holiness and love, as Savior and Creator;

4. To feast on Sabbath time and Lord's Day celebrations, blending both the richness of the Sabbath and the victory of Jesus Christ over sin, evil and death;

Sabbath is not about legalistic "can't do" rules but invites us to celebrate God's marvelous love for humans to recreate worn-down people into the vibrant, worshiping, communing and awesome image of God.

5. To value God's values, fellowship with believers and enjoy beauty that God as Creator has made in the world;

6. To accept Sunday assignments with the spirit that Marva Dawn describes: all preparation done ahead of time and the preaching-teaching done as celebration and sharing that enriches self and others;

7. To give to the poor in order to continue the biblical practice of charity (an integral part of the Jewish Sabbath) and work toward overcoming economic fractures in the human family;

8. To assist my spouse in meals (prepared ahead of Sabbath-Lord's Day time) that foster Sabbath feasting, and fellowship that includes play, joy and celebration of God's good gifts;

9. To ban or reduce to a minimum whatever intrudes from the desires of possessiveness, symbolized by TV and buying and selling (note that I do not include travel per se in this ban);

10. To experiment with some ritual to begin and end Sabbath time (lighting candles) as well as some family practice like reading to each other a chapter in a good book (Marva Dawn's is on the top of the list). Perhaps I will welcome the Sabbath by adapting one of the family rituals suggested by author Gabe Huck:

"Come let us welcome the Sabbath and Lord's Day light.

May its radiance illumine our hearts as we kindle these tapers.

May the Lord bless us with Sabbath rest, with Lord's Day joy.

May the Lord bless us with Sabbath holiness, with Lord's Day triumph.

May the Lord bless us with Sabbath peace,with Lord's Day praise."

Many of these 10 resolves will be done with other believers, thus avoiding the current tendency to reduce our spiritual life to individualized practices. Above all, Sabbath-keeping will aim to bring God and his salvation in Jesus Christ into vitalizing relationship with all of life, to thus check—and perhaps convert—the tendency of work to be alienating to the self and the community.

Let us welcome the weekly Sabbath-Lord's Day as God's gift to us, with a spirit of anticipation. As Dawn puts it, "To keep the Sabbath invites us to have festival fun, to play, to enjoy our guests and our activities, to relish the opportunity for worship, to celebrate the eternal presence of God. … We feast in every aspect of our being—physical, intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual—and we feast with music, beauty, food and affection. Our bodies, minds, souls and spirits celebrate together with others that God is in our midst."

So shall our Sabbath be a day of renewing rest, our Lord's Day a day of gladness, so that God's "temple in time" empowers us in all our days to be the image of God.

Willard Swartley teaches New Testament and serves as dean at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Resources on the Sabbath

- *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* by Marva J. Dawn (Eerdmans, 1989)
- *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women* by Willard Swartley (Herald Press, 1983)
- "The Portable Sabbath: Why Americans Have Turned to Meditation," by Harvey Cox (*The Washington Post*, Oct. 23, 1977)
- *Sabbath Time: Understanding and Practice for Contemporary Christians* by Tilden Edwards (Seabury, 1982)
- *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* by Abraham Heschel (Farrar, Straus and Giraux, 1951)
- "Temple in Time" by Arthur Waskow (*The Other Side*, Jan.-Feb. 1996)
- "Remembering Sabbath, Imagining Grace," by Donna Schaper (*The Other Side*, Jan.-Feb. 1996)

Why so many oxen in the pit?

The Sabbath is a gift; Sunday is special. But many things make it difficult to keep it that way.

Edgar Stoesz

Many of us grew up with some restrictions on what was permissible on the Sabbath. In the solidly Mennonite farm community where I grew up, no one was seen in the field on Sunday. Even farm and household chores were kept to a minimum. People took liberties only when the proverbial ox, referred to in the Gospels, had fallen into the pit.

Our observance began already on Saturday, when we washed the car, baked and bathed, cleaned the house and yard, studied the Sunday school lesson and went to bed early. Sunday was for church and to visit and rest. Playing ball or even table games was frowned upon. And studying for a big test? Well, it shouldn't happen, but on occasions we yielded, though not without a twinge of guilt.

Making others work on Sunday

Jim Whitmer

Fifty years later, it seems the pit is luring the ox. Airlines make it attractive to fly on Sunday, causing many boards and committees to meet on the weekend, sometimes spilling over into Sunday morning. When my frugality ethic clashes with my Sabbath ethic—well, my pew is empty that Sunday. My brothers and sisters understand; they do it, too.

The plot to cheat me out of a day of rest also invades the sanctity of my home, as it is easy to slip into my home office to "get an early start on the week." Going to the office on Sunday is out of the question, but at home? Who is the wiser? Maybe I'm playing computer games or "fellowshiping" on the internet.

My heart goes out to businesspeople. By holding to the old ethic, they deny themselves what is becoming the best shopping day of the week. Some have made the compromise, and an excruciating one it is, as they schedule their employees for duty and offer specials to attract customers to their store on the hallowed day.

'The devil is wily': Now there is a new wrinkle. Restaurants offer to donate 10 percent of a Sunday bill to the church of choice. That hits us where we are vulnerable. "Ooh," as Mother used to say, "the devil is wily, always looking for an easy victim."

We don't mow our lawn or wash our car or sew or bake on Sunday, but we are not purists. We have, on rare occasions, gone to a convenience store anonymously and inconspicuously to pick up an essential item. I watch a lot of TV (the big games and the best news programs are on Sunday). Sometimes we go out for pizza, requiring others to work, but they don't seem to mind, if the tip is good.

Legalism aside, I don't want Sunday to become just another day of the week. I need a Sabbath for the very reasons God instituted it at Creation: for rest and reflection, to draw me out of the secular world, to be renewed in body and spirit. The Sabbath is a gift. Sunday is special. I want to keep it that way.

Edgar Stoesz lives in Akron, Pa.

Mark Beach (MCC)

Human being, not human doing

Dave Waldowski

Many disciples of the work ethic feel guilty if they rest or relax. Their motto is, "Activity and productivity are good; inactivity is a sign of laziness, which is evil."

On the other hand, Smohalla, teacher of the Nez Perce, said, "My young men shall never work. Men who work cannot dream; and wisdom comes to us in dreams."

In the biblical narrative of Eden's paradise (Genesis 1), work was not an obsessive and oppressive experience. It was a pleasant task of caring for a beautiful garden and creatively naming the animals. In Eden's paradise, work was not the ultimate good; harmonious relationships with God, others, self and nature were the central aspects of God's original creation.

Work as an obsessive and oppressive experience begins in Genesis 3, where God tells the man how different life will be in a broken, sinful world in contrast to Eden's paradise.

Jesus shows us a balance. He was active and worked hard as he taught, counseled and healed people. He also stopped working at times so he could pray, dream and reflect on life and God's will. A friend of mine often says, "I am a human being, not a human doing."

God help us find this balance of work and rest so that we may be responsible as well as mystical.

Dave Waldowski is pastor at Good Shepherd Community Church in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Letters

CONCERNED FOR IMMIGRANTS

During the past seven months our community has experienced several Immigration and Naturalization Service raids in local businesses and factories. As a result of these raids, approximately 150 people were deported. Many families were divided, with parents returned to their original countries without their children, or the primary breadwinner removed from the family.

We in the Goshen, Ind., area are concerned about the recent welfare and immigration laws passed by the U.S. Congress in 1996 that limit benefits to documented people and dramatically restrict the ability of undocumented people to get the needed documents for working and living legally in this country. We are concerned about the families who are separated by the raids as well as the churches who are directly affected by the raids. And we are gravely concerned about a mood across the country that is anti-immigration and anti-stranger. Indeed, a recent proposal to the Elkhart (Ind.) County Council wanted to restrict county funds to organizations that aided undocumented people. Although the proposal was tabled, we wonder how such proposals are interpreted both by citizens and noncitizens. We believe that such legislative attempts foster a spirit of alienating and of alienation.

As faithful people, we are called by God to both welcome and love the stranger in our homeland. God calls us to this because we were once strangers, because by welcoming strangers we might entertain angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2) and because without God's grace, we are all strangers and aliens, separated from God and one another (Ephesians 2:11-22).

Furthermore, God also told the Israelites to treat foreigners justly and "the alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:34).

Finally, North America is a land of immigrants. Except for Native Americans, each of us can trace an ancestor who was an immigrant. This ancestry of immigrants compels us toward a compassionate response to current immigrants.

Because of our continuing concerns, we invite other churches and groups to join us in learning about the new welfare and immigration laws, their ramifications on documented and undocumented immigrants and the complex process of attaining legal resident status in the United States. *The Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Ministerial Council: Assembly, Berkey Avenue, College, Communion Fellowship, East Goshen, Eighth Street, Faith, Iglesia del Buen Pastor, North Goshen, Silverwood and Walnut Hill Mennonite churches*

TOO INCLUSIVE

Are more than seven partly repetitious pages (including the editorial) on inclusive language too many for the July 22 issue? Not if we still have a problem, and we do have more than one. In some ways we still need to include women and others more fully, but we also need recognition of growing problems on the other side. When the pendulum swings in human affairs, it doesn't stop near the middle (as I claim it often should).

Note first that "chairman," "freshman," "foreman" have exactly the same structure as "woman," with the last syllable unaccented, so they can't refer only to men. We can think otherwise only by focusing too narrowly, perhaps to promote an ideological agenda, and by ignoring actual speech for the inadequate written form.

Some of our colleges, churches and others nevertheless don't just permit alternative words but actually ban words like "chairman." As Marg Rempel says on the other side, "I beg you not to panic" when some of us resurrect such newly forbidden words. And as your report asks on page 6, "Are differences of opinion accepted, or do they arouse anger and irritation?" How about some tolerance on both sides?

Page 5 notes the verse, "Wives, be subject to your husbands," but then essentially denies it by telling us to read it more carefully. Partial feminist that I am, I squirm about this verse too, but it's still there. Women should not be "lorded over," but if we pick and choose, as we often do, aren't we hypocrites if we then criticize others for ignoring, say, pacifist passages?

And on page 11, must we say "people who are young" for "children"?

Finally, can women also be recognized as sinners? I haven't noticed any specific examples in recent years in the written or spoken word in our denomination, although men, both ancient and modern, are often pointed out this way.

If we insist on pushing the pendulum completely to this side, let's not be surprised if we simply alienate new groups of people. *Ronald Rich, Bluffton, Ohio*

NOT INCLUSIVE ENOUGH

I appreciated the July 22 issue on inclusive language. When it comes to inclusive language in churches, we probably are more comfortable with making our language referring to humans gender inclusive. In most of our churches, using feminine pronouns (she, her) for God to balance male language of God is not going to be as easy. We still have a tendency, sometimes unconsciously, to use predominantly male pronouns and images for God, even among those who promote inclusive language.

The article, "Language for Mission: Toward an Inclusive Church" (page 3) is reprinted from the Council on Faith and Life Pamphlet #4, produced by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. In an article promoting inclusive language we find that three times the pronoun "he" is used for God ("God created humankind in *his* own image" and another similar quote from Genesis: "God created humankind in *his* own image, male and female *he* created them"). There are at least three inclusive language versions of the Bible available that could have been used to avoid using male language for God in this quotation. There is no corresponding use of "she" for God within the article, while all along the article advocates inclusive language for God.

I would like to encourage our churches who are open to inclusive language about humanity, and to invite worship leaders (and those writing about inclusive language) to be more aware and risk a balanced presentation of inclusive language for God. *Leo Hartshorn, Lancaster, Pa.*

Children are people, too

Denise Preller is director of God's Little Acre Preschool at North Danvers Mennonite Church, Danvers, Ill., where she is a member.

Is Sabbath possible with young children?

Yes, but it requires commitment to be, not do.

Denise Preller

On a recent stormy afternoon our electricity went out. I was again amazed at how having no electricity makes our home cease functioning. We have an electric pump at the well, an electric range, an electric water heater and dryer, and electricity runs our computer, television and other "entertainment" paraphernalia.

However, my son and I enjoyed a wonderful afternoon playing board games, reading books, being together. I couldn't clean or do other work; he couldn't watch television, play his keyboard or video games. I could *be* with my son, guilt free, because I couldn't *do* anything else. Sometimes I wish our power would go off every Sunday afternoon. Then we could have a guilt-free Sabbath, doing nothing but being together.

For many, keeping the Sabbath means simply going to church. This public Sabbath is too often the only Sabbath experience we claim. I encourage us to claim a private Sabbath as well.

The first Sabbath came when, after six days of creating, God rested (ceased). In Hebrew, "Sabbath" means to desist, or to do nothing. Because the concept of God being tired doesn't seem possible, perhaps the meaning lies in the example of God taking time to be instead of to do. God had finished the work of creation and took time exclusively to be with creation and to do absolutely nothing.

I remember fantasizing about a remote control pause button I could press and freeze my young child in time until I pressed the button again. But in reality a parent of a small child is always "on," and that includes on the Sabbath. It is difficult to find signs of a private Sabbath in the typical schedule on a Sunday morning for families with young children.

Here is a fairly common to-do list:

1. Get up early.
2. Prepare breakfast for the family.
3. Clean up after breakfast.
4. Pack bag of supplies to take to church (diapers, extra clothes, wet wipes, ziplock bag, snack, bottle, milk, toys, diaper rash cream, blanket).
5. Make sure Sunday school lesson is prepared and all supplies gathered.
6. Get clothes ready for the family.
7. Get children dressed and hair combed.
8. Make sure children have their needed supplies for Sunday school, including their Bibles.
9. Begin preparations for the noon meal.
10. Get everyone to the car on time without getting dirty.

> ***Seek with all your heart a private Sabbath of ceasing, doing nothing, being, for it is good and right for your soul.***

And that is only a partial list of what a family might be do before they reached church.

Participating in the public Sabbath experience is often work for parents of small children and work for their children. Small children are often asked to do things that border on the impossible, like sitting in one place for more that five minutes and being quiet.

One mother of a now grown son once told me how she used to spank him severely almost every Sunday because he wouldn't sit still during worship. She said with tears in her eyes, "I now think he would be diagnosed as hyperactive, but back then I didn't know. I thought he was just being bad." Neither mother nor son were having a Sabbath experience.

Since our public Sabbath experience is much about doing, we need to look for ways to make our private Sabbath experience more about being. Here are some suggestions for being with your children on a Sabbath:

1. Sit with your child on your lap. No music, no television, no talking, just being together for a few minutes, or as long as feels comfortable. For an older child you may wish to sit next to each other on a couch or a chair or take them out to watch the sunset or the stars together.

2. Spread a blanket out on the floor and play with your child. Let them direct the activity. Resist the urge to suggest or teach during this time.

3. Make a commitment to private time for both parents sometime during the day. Take turns parenting.

4. Make at least one Sunday a month family-only time. No shopping, no parties, no friends over, no chores, no gardening, no trips, no mowing, no painting or cleaning, just being together as a family.

We tend to plan every minute, structure all our time and go, go, go. The example God gave us in the beginning was that being is also important. Many times we think of these times of doing nothing as a luxury we cannot afford or an impossibility we can never achieve. Parenting is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year job. We tend to work at it as tenaciously as we do everything else. We seldom allow ourselves the divine privilege of enjoying our creation, God's creation, for "God saw all God had made and it was good" (Genesis 1:31).

Take your children to a public Sabbath experience; it is good and right to worship the Lord on Sunday morning. But also seek with all your heart a private Sabbath of ceasing, doing nothing, being, for it is good and right for your soul. You should not have to cut off all electricity to your home every Sunday afternoon, but if you must, you must.

Learning to pray

Where have all the Sabbaths gone?

We need to set aside one day a week as a holy day so that all our days become holy.

Marlene Kropf

Some say the shopping mall has replaced the church as the spot where Americans gather on weekends. Perhaps just as the cathedral or village church was the center of life in an earlier time, the shopping mall stands at the center of people's lives today.

If you think about the comparison, some interesting parallels emerge. Churches used to be built at the center of town. In New England villages, you still find the church at the center of town, right near city hall or the courthouse. Today when new shopping malls are built, traffic patterns are reconfigured, and new roads are built so that people can easily get in and out of the mall.

Then think about the architecture of a typical enclosed mall. The high vaulted ceilings are reminiscent of the spacious interior of a Gothic cathedral. Large banners may flutter above shoppers, and floral displays change with the seasons. Many malls also have a fountain at the center—perhaps the secular equivalent of the baptismal font.

Music often surrounds the shopper at the mall, enhancing the unfolding liturgy on all sides. Especially during the "high, holy shopping seasons," special choirs and band concerts contribute to the festive atmosphere.

Marlene Kropf has been appointed assistant professor in spiritual formation and worship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

With full parking lots, perhaps shopping malls have become our cathedrals of consumption. People take their tithes and offerings to the mall, where they are greeted by priests and priestesses—sales clerks behind the altar—who receive their offerings.

Think of the food that is ritually eaten at the mall. Might an Orange Julius and a pretzel be a substitute for the bread and wine of Communion?

The shopping mall also functions as a gathering place for the community. What other place brings together the rich and poor, the learned and ignorant, many races and cultures, and invites them to mingle with each other? The parish church used to provide this function in a community, but now the mall seems to be the place to gather. Teenagers go to the mall just to "hang out." The elderly sit on benches, waiting for someone or something. No one knows quite what.

Often shoppers go to the mall looking for something and return home unsatisfied and empty-handed. Is it possible they are looking for God and don't know it?

Worship is meant to be the core of our lives, the act that gives meaning to the rest of our lives. Worship is meant to satisfy our deepest longings. It is the purpose for which we were created. Yet in America we may have replaced worship with the shopping mall. If that is true, then we should not be surprised to see intense spiritual hunger erupting in many places.

The Sabbath is God's idea—a day set aside to worship God, remember God's mighty acts in the world, revel in God's love, hear God's word anew and revive our love and commitment to God.

The Sabbath is God's idea—a day set aside to worship God, remember God's mighty acts in the world, revel in God's love, hear God's word anew and revive our love and commitment to God. Of course, we can worship God any day of the week—and that is our goal. But we need to set aside one day a week as a holy day so that all our days will become holy.

It is easy to forget that God is the center of our lives, the wellspring of all truth and goodness and love. To keep that awareness alive, we need a bit of Sabbath time daily in which we renew our relationship with God as well as the weekly Sabbath with its more leisurely time for meeting God.

Our weekly gathering for worship will more readily fulfill its purpose of renewal if we make suitable preparations in advance. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Plan to get a good night's rest on Saturday night.
2. Before you go to sleep, pray that God will prepare your heart for worship the next day.
3. When you awaken on Sunday morning, thank the risen Christ for this day of celebration.
4. Get up in plenty of time so you will be relaxed when you arrive at the place of worship.
5. On your way to church, pray for the other members of your congregation who are also on their way to worship.
6. Pray also for the worship leader, musicians, ushers and the preacher.
7. Come into the meeting place with "holy expectancy" that you will meet God. Then see what happens.

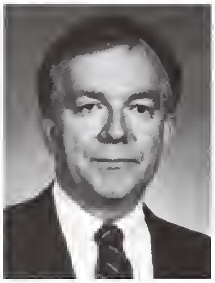
The shopping mall is not finally meant to be our destination. We are meant to find our home in the presence of the living God. When we keep the Sabbath, we join in the life-giving rhythm of ministry and Sabbath that honors our Maker and brings deep peace and satisfaction to ourselves and all we meet.

Do you have topics related to prayer that you'd like Marlene to address? Write her c/o *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

Beware of the bear

Those with stock mutual funds may want to consider reinvesting part of them.

J.B. Miller



J.B. Miller is financial services product manager for AMA Solutions, Inc. in Chicago.

Anyone who reads the financial pages of the newspaper knows that the U.S. stock market is at historic highs. On July 24 the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which is an indicator of how the market is performing, closed at 8116.93, a record, and the stock market has been on a tear for three years. This year alone the Dow Jones Average has risen 25.88 percent, only slightly less than the 26 percent return realized in all of 1996.

People investing in stock mutual funds have participated in this rise as well. The average growth and income mutual fund is up 22.23 percent. Over a three-year period the average annual return on a growth and income mutual fund is over 25 percent. This translates to the following: If an investor invested $1,000 in a mutual fund on July 24, 1994, and the fund performed as an average growth and income mutual fund, today that same investor would have more than $1,950. And while investors are happy for their returns, there also may be reason to be concerned.

The market could go higher still, but some stock market watchers believe now may be the time to become more defensive. In some people's minds, the market is overvalued by 15 to 20 percent. The average price earnings (p/e) ratio for the market now is 20 times projected 1998 profits. A more normal p/e ratio is 17 times. So when you invest in the market today you may be paying too much for the stock. We know that when stocks have traded at these p/e levels the returns in the next two to three years following are in the 1 percent annual range. Quite a difference from the 25-plus percent we have reached this year.

One way to protect your investments during times like this is to sell a portion of your holdings. Take a portion of the profits and wait for stocks to become a better value again. This is no different from a farmer selling some property when prices seem unreasonably high, putting the money away and waiting for the prices to come down. Any farmer who was farming in the '80s knows what that's about.

Good strategy: Few investment professionals suggest getting out of the stock market completely. We know that over time stocks still provide the best rate of return, far out-pacing certificates of deposit and bond funds. But a good strategy may be to reduce your stock holding by 20 to 30 percent and park the money in a savings or money-market account. When a correction occurs you will then have cash to reinvest in the market. You will have the opportunity to buy the same stock at much lower prices.

What will cause a correction and a stagnation in stock returns? One possibility is that corporate profits may level out or decline in the next 12 months. During the current economic cycle many companies have maintained their profit margins by finding ways to reduce costs. When this occurs, and because of the competitive environment, prices do not need to rise. When productivity gains can no longer occur, profits for these companies will slow to the point that companies have two choices: raise prices, which may bring on inflation, or accept a lower rate of profit growth. Stocks will decline under either scenario.

To cut stock exposure at this time may also be good asset allocation management. With the three-year double-digit returns, an investor's holdings may be overweighted too much on the stock side, even if no new money was invested in the market during the period.

Some people may believe their stock investments are protected from a correction because of what they own. Certainly some portfolios are less subject to corrections and are less risky. But when there is a correction, generally stocks fall, and stock mutual funds will fall with them. Buying the "blue chip" stocks will not protect you.

An investor may feel that having money in cash or cash equivalent investments such as certificates of deposit or savings accounts will result in not meeting investment objectives. In the short term that may be true, but the best way to build returns is to buy stock when they are selling at below-average prices. This can only happen if you have cash on hand when the correction occurs.

Because of the capital gains tax implications of selling appreciated stock, you may want to consult your tax consultant. And consider giving some of your appreciated stock to your favorite charity and avoid the stock tax completely on the gifted portion.

Dow Jones Industrial Average—A group of 30 stocks selected to represent the overall market. The movement in the average is often seen as an indicator as to how the stock market is reacting in general.

Price earning ratio—A ratio that indicates the price of a stock relative to the earnings per share of the company. An example: If a company has 1 million outstanding shares of stock, the company earns $2 and the stock is trading at $44 per share, the p/e ratio is 22.

Market condition—When the overall market declines. There probably is no specific percentage decline given as a correction, but often considered in the 10 percent or greater range.

Asset allocation—The process of investing in various investment categories, i.e., domestic stock funds, international stock funds, corporate bond funds, real estate, gold.

News

MCs pass merger proposals

Orlando, Fla. (*Gospel Herald*)—Mennonite Church (MC) delegates meeting here July 29-Aug. 2 passed three proposals for integration with the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), including a "new" name and new periodical for the merged denomination.

GC delegates meeting in Winnipeg July 6-8 had already voted in favor of the name "Mennonite Church," merger of *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald* in early 1998 into a new magazine to be called *The Mennonite,* and a timetable for joining the two General Boards.

The nearly 7,000 MC convention attenders were welcomed by the racially and ethnically diverse Southeast Mennonite Conference. The youth convention was the largest gathering of Mennonite youth in history, with 3,920 youth and 1,250 sponsors. Attendance figures were rounded out by 1,290 adults, 370 children and more than 100 volunteers.

New name: On the last day of business, delegates agreed by a 95 percent vote that the merged denomination should be called Mennonite Church.

"While I'll vote in favor, I think we're missing a marvelous opportunity to choose a name that symbolizes more the newness we are going into," said Richard Showalter, Lancaster Conference.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Integration Committee (IC) co-chair, said the committee chose the name Mennonite Church because they believe it speaks best to people outside the denomination. "Most of the concerns about this name are insider concerns," Nickel Friesen said.

New publication: It was also name that delegates discussed when considering a second IC recommendation, about a new periodical.

An attempt to take the name out of the recommendation brought a reminder from moderator-elect Dwight McFadden that the GCs had already adopted all three recommendations; thus they needed to be considered as written.

While the delegates agreed by an 86 percent vote to begin the new publication in early 1998, one teller reported at least a third of the ballots had comments on them, most about the name *The Mennonite*.

A new church: How fast merger should happen had a much easier time in the discussion. While several delegates spoke about a third recommendation—that an integrated General Board and delegate assembly be formed as early as 1999—few did so with as much passion as they had about names. They also gave the go-ahead by a 98 percent vote.

MC delegates also worked with three statements presented earlier to GC delegates in Winnipeg. After vigorous discussion, delegates voted to adopt the statement on violence "in principle," leaving final wording to the drafting committee. "Passed—with a dozen strong Nos," moderator Owen Burkholder summarized the voice vote.

There weren't any Nos for two other statements passed by the delegates: one a mission statement for congregational youth ministry, the second a resolution on global missions brought by Pacific Southwest Conference.

Assembly delegates also heard a review of what has happened in the church since adoption of Vision: Healing and Hope two years previously at Wichita '95.

"This statement has become more than a bookmark in our Bibles or 38 words we repeat occasionally," said Abe Bergen, Winnipeg, a member of the vision steering committee. "It has caught on in our churches much more than we had hoped."

Mark Vincent reported a similar phenomenon for The Giving Project, which he heads. This new venture in stewardship education already has 300 congregations committed—planners were hoping for at least 80, Vincent reported.

Then five women from Indiana-Michigan lined up at a mike and asked, "But where are the women on your board?"

"Mea culpa—we are guilty," responded Everett Thomas, president of the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, one of the project's sponsors. *J. Lorne Peachey*

Inside the news

Rainbow Church faces conference discipline / p. 14

Commentary: Moderator addresses misconceptions / p. 14

New homes and healing follow tornado / p. 17

In Winnipeg, one delegate felt excluded / p.18

Colombia church marks 50 years of fruitfulness / p. 19

The Northern District Conference women's retreat will be held Sept. 20-21 at Swan Lake Christian Camp in Viborg, S.D. The theme is "Joyfully on the Way," based on Philippians. The cost of the retreat is $30. Send registrations, by Sept. 10, to Swan Lake Christian Camp, 45474 - 288th St., Viborg, SD 57070-6437.

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The third Vietnamese Mennonite Conference met July 5-6 in Winnipeg. It was hosted by the Winnipeg Vietnamese Mennonite Church and met in its recently-acquired facilities. Participants came from eight congregations in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Hawaii, Pennsylvania and Virginia. David Chiu, director of evangelism and church development for the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia, spoke on developing church leaders with clear principles, values and vision. Participants took action to form a North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, and chose a four-member coordinating group. They made commitments to publish a newsletter, encourage the training of church leaders and formation of new churches in North America, and support for ministries within Vietnam. The next conference is projected for 1999 in eastern Pennsylvania.

Women comprise 46 percent of the work force but, according to the Ms. Foundation, only hold 2 percent of "power" positions in corporations. (*The Marketplace*)

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A member of the Church of the Brethren helped save the world from alien invaders, according to the COB *Messenger*. In the recent movie *Mars Attacks!*, the music of Slim Whitman—a singer with a distinctive high tenor voice and on-again off-again popularity—repels bloodthirsty Martians. Whitman is a member of Jacksonville (Fla.) Church of the Brethren. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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"The Healing Ministry of the Church," held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., June 13-14, stressed themes of prayer, forgiveness and compassion. Plenary speaker Tilda Norberg, United Methodist minister and psychotherapist, stressed forgiving and being forgiven as essential elements in healing. She also emphasized the need for spiritual companioning and rituals of healing. Willard M. Swartley, AMBS dean and professor of New Testament, explored themes of healing in the Bible. "If we are to be about the ministry of healing we need also to work out of compassion from within us, received by grace from God. Whatever we do in healing, prayer is at the heart of it." Marcus G. Smucker, AMBS professor of pastoral theology, noted four disciplines that are important for our wholeness and health: prayer, detachment from our busy lives, contemplation and compassion. Participants responded with suggestions that included more teaching and preaching about healing, giving more emphasis to confession, prayer and assurance of forgiveness, leading healing services regularly in the congregation so healing is seen as ongoing and not only at times of crisis, giving more emphasis on the "nurse in the congregation" program and forming healing teams in congregations. *Mary E. Klassen*

Rainbow Church faces conference discipline

Newton, Kan.—Rainbow Mennonite Church of Kansas City, Kan., has joined the growing number of congregations under fire by area conferences for their stance on homosexuality and church membership.

Delegates to South Central Conference of the Mennonite Church, meeting July 3-5 in Lawrence, Kan., heard a brief report on meetings of SCC's conference minister, Dick Headings, and representatives of the SCC executive committee with Rainbow that have occurred in the past year. In addition, SCC moderator Howard Keim's address dealt directly with the issue of Rainbow's relationship to the conference (see accompanying commentary). In June 1996, Rainbow declared itself a "publicly affirming" member of the Supportive Congregations Network (SCN), a group of Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations who accept gay and lesbian people as members.

"We decided 20 years ago, in our church council, that we would accept all people under the same standards, regardless of sexual orientation," says Rainbow pastor Frank Ward. "We joined SCN at the publicly affirming level because we thought it was hypocritical to say we accepted [everyone] but no one knew except us."

SCN membership is "the critical issue with South Central Conference," says Ward. "They feel that because we've taken a step 'at variance with conference policy,' we've placed ourselves outside the conference."

The SCC executive committee will mail a ballot to all its member congregations for their votes on what to do with Rainbow. The expectation is that there will be two options: expulsion from the conference or associate membership status.

It is also possible, says Ward, that Rainbow might be able to offer a third option, but this has yet to be determined.

The executive committee originally planned to send the ballots out after SCC met in early July. However, says Ward, "there was a bit of a mix-up—we thought we'd be able to go back and discuss the options with the congregation before the ballots went out. So we asked them to back up and give us more time."

The revised plan is to send ballots out in October, after the next SCC executive committee meeting.

"The ballots will be sent out with additional material," says Ward, "including Rainbow's understanding of the biblical material [on homosexuality] and how we came to our decision, and the executive committee's understanding of the biblical material."

The decision on Rainbow's status in the conference will be made by a simple majority vote.

Rainbow Mennonite Church is dually affiliated with Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Rainbow's announcement of its membership in SCN helped prompt New Hopedale Mennonite Church of Meno, Okla., to propose that a resolution outlining Western District's stance on homosexuality and church membership be brought to the WDC meeting in Lakewood, Colo., June 13-15. No resolution came to the floor, but WDC did schedule a workshop with presenters from both sides of the issue (see *The Mennonite*, July 8, 1997, page 15). *Melanie A. Zuercher*

COMMENTARY

Moderator addresses misconceptions

Editor's note: *The following is excerpted from the moderator's address by Howard Keim to the meeting of South Central Conference of the Mennonite Church, July 3-5 in Lawrence, Kan.*

Homosexuality is an issue taken seriously by all groups in our conference, regardless of their particular position. Since we do take it seriously, our feelings run deep, and we are easily provoked and easily hurt. We find it difficult to separate our own emotional reactions from what may be best for the conference.

When we have strong convictions, and deep feelings connected to them, we tend to demonize people who hold other positions. This kind of enemy-thinking does no good for ourselves, for those who disagree or, ultimately, for the church.

Homosexuality has proven to be a

divisive issue in other conferences and may also be in our own conference. … I hope that we as a conference can stay together. However, if by reason of sincere conviction and conscience we cannot, then I am determined that we will speak respectfully to each other. If congregations or groups of congregations eventually choose to leave the conference, let us conduct ourselves in ways that will help us to respect each other's decisions. Let us not say things to each other now that will make reconciliation for ourselves or our children impossible.

During the past year, I have heard and read comments from both ends of the spectrum that represent faulty assumptions about others. Today, I hope to help us correct some of these ideas that unnecessarily polarize us. I am not going to attempt to change convictions. But I am going to challenge some assumptions about those who take the other view. Even as I speak, I recognize that my own perceptions cannot be completely accurate. So perhaps my comments can serve to stimulate healthy conversation among us.

I recognize that I am a product of both my environment and the choices I've made. I have a deep appreciation for my growing-up years in a Conservative Conference Mennonite church. I felt the pain of people I knew who faced excommunication while I also felt the sincere, genuine love of the congregation for me. … I have known and worked closely with people who identify themselves as homosexual. My own strong agreement with the Mennonite confession of faith on this issue has not come without thought, care and some pain.

Others' stories will be different [from] my own, but we all have convictions and we all have some measure of pain when we deal with this issue.

I offer some comments regarding our perceptions of those who affirm Rainbow's position, and then address perceptions of those who advocate swift and strong disciplinary action.

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Mickey's tarnished image

DISNEY PAYS 28¢/hr
DISNEY CO HAITIAN WORKERS SAY, "HEY MICKEY PASS THE BREAD
STOP PAYING MICKEY MOUSE WAGES IN HAITI

Mennonite Weekly Review—Paul Schrag

Orlando, Fla. (CPT)—One hundred-degree heat did not deter members and supporters of Christian Peacemaker Teams from calling attention to Haitian workers' struggle to gain a fair wage. An estimated 200 people attending the Mennonite Church convention here joined daily prayer vigils July 29-Aug. 2 calling on the Walt Disney Company to "Pass the Bread" and "Stop Paying Mickey Mouse Wages" to Haitian workers in Disney assembly plants. Disney subcontractors in Haiti pay apparel factory workers $2.25 U.S. a day—less than half of what is required to meet a family's basic daily needs. Orlando is dominated by Disney-owned recreational facilities, including Disney World.

Local TV stations, the Associated Press and National Public Radio carried news of the event. "Our Haitian friends will be really pleased that this matter of fair wages is getting a hearing here," said CPT member Pierre Shantz, who in June returned from Haiti, where he met several times with apparel workers in Port-au-Prince.

Disney supposedly has a code of conduct prohibiting the use of sweatshop labor, but it has not addressed the 28 cents an hour (minimum wage) their subcontractors pay workers in Haiti. Work-related transportation and one meal a day cost Haitian workers for Disney half their daily income.

Haitians and CPT are concerned that, rather than pay a fair wage, Disney will pull its factories out of Haiti and relocate to another country such as China, where international pressure may have less effect. *Wendy Lehman*

The St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite Church senior choir invited the Niagara Regional Police Male Chorus to join them for their spring concert June 8. The police chorus was formed last year for the anniversary celebration of the Niagara police. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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The Mennonite Relief Sale at North Hamburg, Ont., held May 31, raised over $238,000 Cdn. for Mennonite Central Committee, up from $233,000 last year. A painting by Peter Etril Snyder sold for $4,000; 1,350 strawberry pies sold out before noon. A relief sale music gala at Waterloo-Kitchener (Ont.) United Mennonite Church that evening raised an additional $916. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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The first Mennonite Central Committee thrift store celebrated its 25th anniversary May 26. The store, in Altona, Man., began March 12, 1972, selling used clothing and housewares. A second store selling men's and boy's clothes, furniture and appliances came later; the two stores combined in 1980. Peter Peters, MCC Manitoba director, says the Altona shop has donated an estimated $2 million Cdn. since the store opened. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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Six gatherings on stewardship, sponsored by The Giving Project, will be held in 1998. The weekend meetings will focus on mercy ministries, dedicating offerings and preaching and teaching about money. Don Fry of Mennonite Mutual Aid, Marilyn Houser Hamm, Peter Wiebe and Leslie Francisco II will be resource people for the gatherings. The 1998 gatherings will be held in Wichita, Kan., March 27-28; South Bend, Ind., April 3-4; Perkasie, Pa., April 17-18; Winnipeg, April 24-25; Fresno, Calif., May 1-2, and Abbotsford, B.C., May 15-16. For more information contact Michele Hershberger at (219) 296-6236; fax (219) 296-6245, or e-mail KHNT99A@ Prodigy.com.

Herald Press and Mennonite Central Committee are planning a new vacation Bible school curriculum to be ready in 1999. The curriculum is projected to release a new course each year with Bible stories and active learning that can be used in many settings. Mennonite Central Committee will develop mission, peace and service learning activities to accompany the Bible stories.

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The Saskatoon relief sale, June 13-14, raised $90,000 Cdn. for Mennonite Central Committee, $10,000 more than last year. A Menno Challenge Cup Relay had five teams competing in roller blade, mountain bike, street bike and running races. Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, was the winner. The fourth annual Winnipeg MCC Festival and Relief Sale, June 13-14, raised $51,000 Cdn., selling antiques, quilts and food. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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The U'wa people of northeast Colombia have issued a threat to the U.S. Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation. At a May 6 meeting at Occidental's Beverly Hills office, U'wa council president Roberto Cobaria told Occidental executives that if the company continues exploring and drilling for oil in U'wa territory, the Indians will commit collective suicide by leaping from a cliff in the Andes. U'wa tribal elders decided on the ultimatum (based on U'wa oral history) after Colombia courts left intact Occidental's license to operate on traditional U'wa land. While Occidental is ready to negotiate a solution after the May 6 meeting, Cobaria insists that there be no oil production on U'wa land. "Oil is the blood of our mother earth. ... It is not negotiable. If Occidental moves in by force, there will be a suicide." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

COMMENTARY

continued from page 15

There are several misconceptions we may have regarding Rainbow Mennonite and those who affirm their position.

First, we may believe that they do not take the Bible seriously. This is a false assumption. Rainbow's position has come about as a result of careful study and consideration. They have held this position since before Purdue '87 and before the Supportive Congregations Network was formed. There is, however, a difference in the approach to Scripture as a whole and in interpretation of passages; that is where the disagreement on this issue lies.

Second, we may believe that Rainbow Mennonite is advocating promiscuity or that anything goes—doing away with any morals about sexual behavior. This too is a faulty assumption. There may be congregations who would treat sexual behavior only as the business of the individuals involved. However, this is not the case with Rainbow. They have defined themselves as affirming sexual relations between same-sex partners in a monogamous, committed relationship but in opposition to sexual relations that are promiscuous or exploitative.

Third, we may perceive Rainbow or other churches that advocate this position as being one-issue congregations—with the agenda of promoting homosexuality and homosexual behavior. This may be true of some congregations, but it is not true of Rainbow. Their stance on this issue is one part of who they are as a congregation, and they are involved in a variety of ministries we could all affirm.

There are also several misconceptions we may have about those who advocate strong disciplinary action against Rainbow Mennonite.

First, we may believe that these congregations hold a conservative position because they haven't really dealt with the issue—dismissing homosexual behavior as sin is simply a way of avoiding dealing with it. This is not true. Many pastors and congregations have looked carefully at this issue. It should also be noted that the Mennonite Church itself has spent more than three decades studying this and has affirmed the traditional view. To dismiss groups who hold the traditional view as somehow uninformed or unwilling to deal with it is simply not accurate.

Second, we may think of congregations who oppose same-sex relations as being uncaring toward homosexual people. This is also not true. Holding to a standard of behavior does not indicate a lack of love for a person. We should also note here that homosexual issues are not confined to urban areas. From my own experience, I know that these issues are no stranger to rural churches. People from urban areas who dismiss people from rural areas as lacking experience or compassion are mistaken.

Third, we may think of congregations who advocate strong disciplinary action as being hung up on homosexuality. What is the big deal? Why not be concerned about greed, or other sins? But to accuse these congregations as being out to get homosexuals is just as unfair as accusing Rainbow of being a one-issue congregation. It simply isn't true.

We must resist the temptation to dehumanize those who disagree, or make them out to be our enemies. To falsely stereotype others is an act of violence. May we not be guilty of that.

There is another issue related to this that needs to be considered. That is the nature of the relationship between congregations and conferences. Certainly, in most matters, congregational autonomy must be the norm. On this issue, for example, there is a wide range of pastoral responses to homosexual people, and we should respect the right of specific congregations to develop their own program.

However, congregational autonomy must have its limits. If there are no boundaries of belief and behavior, there is no community. The very definition of church, whether local or worldwide, implies certain limits.

At what point does the necessity for common understanding of Scripture on an issue take precedence over the right of a congregation to decide for itself? Where are we as a Mennonite church going to set our boundaries? This may seem like an abstract issue, but it is an important one. If we say that congregations can decide for themselves on this issue, then what would be appropriate limits? Is this an issue worth dividing the church for? Some issues in the past have been. Or is this an issue on which we can tolerate differences and live with some ambiguity?

New homes and healing follow tornado

Akron, Pa. (MDS)—While U.S. government officials and citizens debate race relations, job reform and how to rebuild a sense of community, the small town of College Station, Ark., is showing one grassroots path to change.

College Station, a small black community adjacent to Little Rock, suffered extensive destruction in a March 1 storm and tornado that tore a 350-mile path of destruction across the state. Today, community members are rebuilding through a joint effort of local citizens and Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

MDS photo

Community: *Harold and Bernita Boyts, members of Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan., help rebuild the home of Manuel Benton, 93. Benton's home was totaled by a March tornado that ravaged College Station, Ark. The Boytses were Mennonite Disaster Service project leaders .*

"Every time that hammer falls it's not just a house, it's reconstructing lives," says Rev. Hezekiah B. Stewart Jr., director of Watershed, a local service agency. "The storm brought white and black together. I have been in Little Rock for 20 years, and this is the first time I didn't see racism."

Along with racial reconciliation, another unexpected benefit of the storm cleanup has been job training and employment for many of the community's young people.

Fred Hokes organizes Watershed teams that work alongside MDS volunteers. The MDSers have brought construction skills from Arkansas, Pennsylvania, Texas and other states, and Watershed workers have helped rebuild their own community and nearby devastated areas, in the process learning job skills that have carried many on to other employment.

"Part of our job is to help individuals become employable and self-sufficient," says Hokes. It seems to be working: Watershed's work teams have a "less than 10 percent retention rate," he says, as workers move on to regular employment elsewhere.

Some have previous work experience and some do not. "We have men, some in their 30s, who have never worked before."

The young men are learning carpentry skills from the MDS volunteers, says Stewart, and interracial relationships are being built as well.

In the early stages, College Station received attention and help from many sources, from President Clinton on down. Today local crews and MDS are the only workers on site, but much remains to be done. MDS plans to work in College Station until December.

The tornado destroyed 40 homes and damaged 68 more, displacing 180 people. Four or five new homes will be completed by the end of August, says MDS construction foreman Stuart Yoder, Nappanee, Ind.

Some 150 volunteers have worked with MDS in College Station over the course of the project, but help is still needed. "We need carpenters, plumbers, electricians, drywallers, you name it," says Yoder.

MDS has requests for work on the homes of more than 100 people, ranging from "total remodel to total rebuild to some with just roof damage." MDS targets those with less ability to help themselves, such as the elderly and single-parent families. MDS provides free labor; residents must buy materials through insurance, grants, loans or gifts. Labor is a little over half the cost of a new home, says Yoder.

Stewart sees the renewal of College Station in theological terms. "I see reconciliation, the hand of the Lord moving, cleansing hearts and minds that remained in an old stagnated state. The Mennonites have shown us a spirit of love, demonstrating it and not just talking about it." The storm's aftermath has helped heal "spiritual disaster" as well as physical, he says.

College Station's experience can be "a model for the rest of the nation," Stewart says. "It's a sign of what can solve problems in many communities, getting to know each other, loving each other, becoming friends." *Ardell Stauffer*

Satanic rock group Marilyn Manson was recently asked by *Details* magazine, "What's in store for the 21st century?" The group's lead singer replied, "We can't go any further without starting over. It's like, what sexual positions are left, what other violence can you show, what other drug can you do, what other things can you get pierced? It's all been done. Sickly enough, maybe what America really needs is for everyone to become a Christian so we can all be excited by the taboos once again." (*Salt of the Earth*)

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Palestinian Nasser Abed Radwan, 28 and father of three, was arrested at his home June 23 by Palestine Authority Force 17 (the presidential security service). His family was not notified of the reason for his arrest or where he was being detained. By the morning of June 24, he was transferred to Shifa hospital in Gaza by members of Force 17, with the identification "prisoner #10." He suffered from internal bleeding in his head and was pronounced clinically brain-dead at this time. He was pronounced dead a week later. Force 17 officers said that Mr. Radwan fell in his cell. Autopsy reports show paralysis in the left arm and leg; an unknown substance came from his mouth. His left arm and leg were fractured and showed signs of having been bound by wire. His head and beard were shaved. Radwan is the 13th Palestinian killed in Palestine Authority custody. The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW) is demanding that the security forces be held accountable for their actions, control be imposed on the different branches of the security forces, and torture immediately eliminated as a tool for interrogation. LAW is requesting faxes be sent to President Yasser Arafat (972) (7) 822365/6, Justice Minister Freih Abu Medein (972) (7) 822236 and Deputy Attorney General Mazen Sisalem (972) (7) 824503, and/or email: Palestine National Authority <info@nmopic.pna.net> and the PLO United Nations representative <palestinun@aol.com>.

A "survivor couples" retreat, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario Family Violence Concerns, will be held Nov. 21-23 near Paris, Ont. The retreat will explore how abuse experienced by the wives during their childhoods has affected their marriages. Survivor couples are planning the retreat and will be joined by therapists Jeanne and Larry Kelly of the United Church of Canada. For information call Jake and Irene Pauls at (519) 886-6193 or Lorraine and Wally Dick at (905) 336-8402. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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"Walk the Road of Peace" is the theme of the 38th annual Christian Peace Pilgrimage from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Pa., Dec. 13. Molly Rush, director of the Thomas Merton Center in Pittsburgh, and one of the Plowshares Eight nuclear weapons resisters, will speak. This is a 10-mile walk, beginning at 12:30 p.m. at Nazareth Moravian Church, ending with a meal and rally at 6 p.m. at Christ United Church of Christ in Bethlehem. For more information contact John Stoner at 728 Fulton St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-3388; e-mail jkstoner@ptd.net.

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A Kansas Mennonite Task Force on Disabilities has been formed to help Mennonite congregations increase their awareness of special needs of members with temporary or permanent disabilities. Following an initial organizing meeting in June 1996, about a dozen people meet periodically to provide education and services to local congregations. Three regional Mennonite conferences participate; other Mennonite groups are also encouraged to participate. The task force will survey congregations to develop an up-to-date record of people with disabilities and an inventory of needed services and programs. For additional information, contact the Western District/South Central conference office at (316) 283-6300. (*William R. Zuercher*)

Beef across the barriers

William Janzen

Wonsan City, North Korea—These are some of the healthier children, says William Janzen, who directs the Ottawa office of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and is one of the few North Americans to have visited North Korea. In other rooms Janzen saw "very thin children with stick-like arms and legs."

Janzen was in North Korea July 8-15 as the MCC representative on a Canadian Foodgrains Bank delegation sent to monitor food aid. This nursery and several other hospitals and kindergartens received 90 metric tons of MCC canned beef in May. For two weeks, more than 114,000 North Korean children had MCC beef added to their otherwise scant meals of rice or porridge. Teachers and nurses reported that the meat provided crucial nutrients.

North Korea has proved difficult to help. "[The government's] secrecy hurts their case immensely," says Janzen. "But if we wait to help people until they have a good government, then we'll wait a long time. We must reach across barriers to give food to people." ***Pearl Sensenig***

In Winnipeg, one delegate felt excluded

Winnipeg (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)—While Immanuel Pentecostal Church here was a hub of Mennonite activity for six days in July, one event didn't go off as planned.

The Supportive Congregations Network (SCN), a group of Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Church of the Brethren congregations that welcome gay, lesbian and bisexual people, had received permission from conference organizers to hold a workshop in a tent on church grounds during the GC delegate sessions July 6-8 (following the Conference of Mennonites in Canada [CMC] meeting July 3-5).

But a June article in *Mennonite Reporter* on SCN events prompted Immanuel not to allow the workshop, according to a June 30 e-mail from GC general secretary James Schrag and CMC general secretary Helmut Harder to Jim Sauder, executive director of Brethren/Mennonite Council for Gay and Lesbian Concerns (BMC), the umbrella organization for SCN.

A year earlier, Sauder had written a letter to Schrag asking for exhibition space, daily prayer or worship time, a scheduled luncheon and a meeting place for dialogue on homosexuality at the denominational assembly.

The request was denied, but the GC informally offered workshop space in Tent B, with the stipulation that this would not be listed in the program book, Sauder said. Schrag confirmed the space availability in a May 1997 e-mail letter.

In the June 30 e-mail, however, Schrag asked that "persons involved in the meeting of the SCN meet somewhere away from the IPC" because it would violate a contract made with the church. He also requested that the group not hold a prayer meeting on the premises.

"The stated purpose of the SCN … is offensive to the policies and convictions of [Immanuel] and their denomination [Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada]," Schrag and Harder wrote. "Our contract promises that in utilizing their property, we will not conduct ourselves in ways contrary to their policies."

Immanuel senior pastor Jim McKnight says the church was only applying policy but would not specify what that policy was.

The workshop was moved to a home

off church grounds.

Sauder says 58 GC congregations—or 15 percent—are in SCN's accepting and publicly affirming categories. While saying he believes the GC did not intend any malice, he says it should have gone to bat for SCN.

"It's disappointing that the General Conference won't provide space and place and hospitality for 15 percent of its member congregations that want to meet," Sauder says.

At the end of the sessions, one delegate said he did not feel welcome because of Immanuel's response to the SCN meeting, and he asked planners to do things differently next time.

Tim Paetkau, First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, said from the assembly floor, "I am a gay man who has been told I am not welcome because Immanuel Pentecostal Church does not want gays and lesbians here.

"From what I understand, [BMC] and [SCN] were promised a spot at this conference to provide opportunity for continued dialogue on the issue of homosexuality. Since the 1986 [Saskatoon] statement on [sexuality] states that we as a General Conference are to continue in loving dialogue on this issue, I wonder where that opportunity ... is at this conference.

"The promise ... was broken, and an apology would be appreciated."

Paetkau recommended that "planners of future conferences ... keep *all* of the church body in mind." GC moderator Darrell Fast asked Paetkau if he would consider his statement as counsel for conference planners and let it be listed in the minutes as such. Paetkau agreed. *Rich Preheim, with a report by Aiden Schlichting Enns*

Colombia church marks 50 years of fruitfulness

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Mennonite missionaries began planting seeds of the gospel in Colombia in 1947. This year, the Colombia Mennonite Church celebrated its 50th anniversary with words from Ecclesiastes 11: "In the morning, sow your seed, and at evening, do not let your hands be idle [that is, continue sowing]."

A number of celebratory events in honor of the 50th year culminated June 30-31 and July 1 at the Mennonite-owned retreat center in Cachipay, Colombia. The Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church began its work there when Gerald and Mary Hope Stucky opened a school for children of parents with Hansen's disease (leprosy) in 1947.

"Cachipay was the physical and spiritual center of the Mennonite church in Colombia for the first 25 years," says Glendon Klaassen, executive secretary of COM who served in Colombia himself from 1960 to 1977. "With the building of the Mennonite Center in Bogota in 1967, Bogota became more of a center, but Cachipay remains as a strong base."

Klaassen attended the June celebration, which included tree-planting, cultural events, reminiscing and storytelling and worship services. "It was a real homecoming," says Klaassen. "People gathered from all over Colombia—about 250 people came to the weekend event. There were lots of 'abrazos' (hugs)!"

Three addresses focused on the past, present and future. Older leaders, such as pioneers Mary Hope Stucky (Gerald died in 1988) and Mary Becker Valencia, talked about the past, current leaders talked about the present, and Klaassen was asked to speak about the future.

"The church in Colombia has to define its own future," Klaassen says. "I told them I didn't come with ready answers, only suggestions, such as, 'Do what you're doing, only more!'"

Immediately after the festivities ended, five Colombian church leaders traveled to Canada to spend a month attending conferences, meeting with North American church leaders and teaching in Manitoba.

In Winnipeg, Alix Lozano, administrator of Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Bogota, and Gustavo Angulo, administrator of the national church, gave some of their thoughts about the 50th anniversary.

Angulo was one of the leaders who spoke about the present at the 50th-anniversary finale. "I emphasized the new constitution in Colombia that gives us more religious freedom and rights for religious education," he says. "[Article 19] gives autonomy to churches to structure themselves, including Christian education."

That article was the one to which the church appealed earlier this year when there was an attempt by the military,

continued on page 21

A miniature Bible, believed to be the smallest ever made, was found in the attic of a house in Stribro, Czech Republic. The 19th-century Bible measures seven by five millimeters and contains excerpts from the Old Testament in Gothic script. It can only be leafed through with a pin. (*United Church Observer*)

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It looked like an ordinary choir—but about a dozen of the men in the East Hill Singers were inmates of the Lansing (Kan.) Correctional Facility. The choir, which also included some 15 men from Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan., and two singers from the Kansas City Lyric Opera chorus, performed sacred and secular music in a free concert June 8 in Kansas City. The choir's director, Elvera Voth, retired in 1995 from a career teaching music in Alaska and moved to Lenexa, Kan. She thought about taking on another chorus, but the local choral scene was already saturated and, she says, "I wanted to give something back to society." Someone she met at a reunion in her home community in central Kansas put her in touch with the warden at Lansing. Voth is now in her second year of working with inmate choruses. (*The Kansas City Star*)

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Security conditions are improving in Phnom Pehn, Cambodia's capital, and in much of the rest of the country, reports Allen Harder, director of Mennonite Central Committee programs there. This follows violence earlier this month when long-standing tensions between the two political parties that share power in Cambodia erupted. MCC-purchased medicines in a customs warehouse at the Phnom Pehn airport were looted. The supplies, valued at about $1,500 Cdn./ $1,100 U.S., were to go to MCC's health program in Prey Veng province. Total war damage in Cambodia is estimated at between $30 to $40 million. A special task force of 400 military police has been appointed to keep order in Phnom Pehn, likely heralding a more authoritarian government presence on the streets.

Record

MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
MEDA—Mennonite Economic Development Associates
SALT—Serving and Learning Together

One hundred Roman Catholic women, ages 21 to 65, were consecrated as virgins in the church at a special Mass in England on May 19. The ancient practice, unused for centuries, involves taking vows and pledges to devote oneself to good works and a life of prayer, but without becoming a nun. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, celebrates its 60th anniversary Oct. 22-26. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., will speak on "An Anabaptist Vision for the Year AD 2000." All friends and former members are invited to attend. For information contact FUMC, 659 East 52 Ave., Vancouver, BC V5X 1G8; (604) 325-2131; fax (604) 325-5885.

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Consultants for The Giving Project met for their first week of training July 23-27 in Kansas City. The second week of training will be in Toronto Sept. 8-12. The consultants experienced a "money autobiography retreat," a time of storytelling and reflection on personal use of money and possessions. Then leaders Mark Vincent and Michele Hershberger outlined a theology of money, with issues such as the god-like power of money, God's values of redemption and shalom, transformation through Jesus and the role of the church community. Vincent and Hershberger also introduced the seven initiatives that the consultants will help implement in congregations: teaching/preaching about money, dedication of offerings, establishing a ministry of mercy, developing relationships between gift-giver and gift-receiver, encouraging firstfruits living, facilitating healthy leadership transfer and improving congregational financial management. For more information about consultant training or The Giving Project, call (219) 296-6236 or e-mail KHNT99A@Prodigy.com.

DEATHS

Bishop Naftali Birai, Musoma, Tanzania, died June 30 in a vehicle accident. Birai served as bishop of the Lake Diocese of the Tanzania Mennonite Church. This past January he served as a delegate of the Tanzanian Mennonite Church at Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta.

MINISTERS

Gary Archibald is pastor at First Church, Clinton, Okla.

Mike Bogard has resigned as youth minister for Western District Conference. He will be pastor at Whitestone Church, Hesston, Kan., beginning Jan. 1, 1998.

Gary Daught is pastor at Shalom Fellowship, Tucson, Ariz.

Ray Hamm has ended as pastor of Altona (Man.) Church.

Ruth Penner, Hope Church, Wichita, Kan., is pastoral intern at First Church, Moundridge, Kan.

WORKERS

Alissa Bender, Steinmann Church, Baden, Ont., is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in Chad as a church worker.

Marie-Andree Denault, Eglise Chretienne des Freres Church, Saint-Jerome, Que., is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in Chad as a church worker.

Sharon Entz, Zion Church, Elbing, Kan., is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in Tlaxcala, Mexico, as an assistant with medicinal plants for a sustainable agricultural development organization.

Dan Epp-Tiessen will be assistant professor of Old Testament at Canadian Mennonite Bible College beginning next summer. He replaces **Waldemar Janzen**.

Heidi L. Friesen, Altona (Man.) Bergthaler Church, is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, as a day-care worker.

Benjamin Horst, Evanston (Ill.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in Ozamiz City, Philippines, as a staff assistant in the Western Mindanao Office of Balay.

Janelle Martin, Waterloo, Ont., is chapter relations coordinator for MEDA. She will be working in MEDA's Kansas City office.

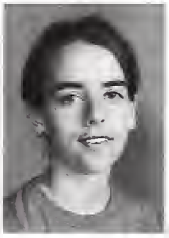
Evan Roth, Rosthern (Sask.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in Santiago de Chiquitos, Bolivia, as an English teacher.

Tanya Siemens, Covenant Church, Winkler, Man., is beginning a one-year

Bender

Denault

Entz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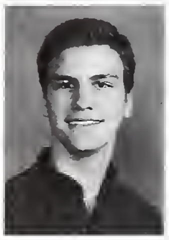
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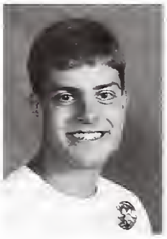
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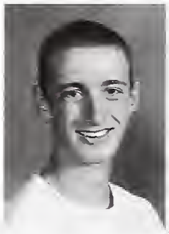
Stoltzfus

Wiens

MCC SALT term in Vladikavkaz, Russia, working with children in an orphanage.

Delbert (Del) Snyder is regional director of development and alumni affairs at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

Ky Stoltzfus, Albuquerque (N.M.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in the Philippines as a medical assistant.

Matthew Wiens, Glenlea (Man.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC SALT term in Asuncion, Paraguay, as an activities assistant at a psychiatric hospital.

Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a **teacher** of the following subjects: **history, government, psychology, computer** and **physical education**. Coaching varsity girls' basketball, boys' basketball and assisting with track is required.

Send resume to **Freeman Academy, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029.**

Accounting faculty: Starting August 1998, **Goshen College** seeks faculty member to teach undergraduate accounting courses. Qualified candidate will hold MBA/CPA or doctorate and possess significant professional experience. Tenure track position. Women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

For further information send resume to **Paul A. Keim, Academic Dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503; fax (219) 535-7060; e-mail pkeim@goshen.edu.** Applications welcomed through web site at **www.goshen.edu.**

Goshen College seeks applicants for two positions as **assistant directors of public relations**. The two positions will divide primary responsibilities in writing, editing and project management, with additional possibilities in photography and sports information; specific division of tasks is dependent on skills of the successful applicants. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree; organizational, writing and verbal skills; ability to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines, and creative energy and the ability to work well in team situations. Some knowledge of graphic design and emerging technologies is a plus. Women and people from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and three references to **Lyle Miller, Interim Director of Public Relations, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535 7572;** fax **(219) 535-7670**; e-mail **lylegm@goshen.edu**; web site **www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be received until the positions are filled.

Is God calling you to fill one of these urgent Mennonite Central Committee service assignments?

MCC needs service workers in Washington for these positions: **research-ministry assistant, administrative assistant**, and **ministry coordinator**, all at Prison Fellowship; **computer consultant** at Reliacom; **staff coordinator** at Keepers of the Treasures; **outreach-education administrative assistant** at National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors; **outreach-development assistant** at National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund. Washington service workers live in a 3-story row house in Mt. Pleasant, an area known for its ethnic and economic diversity. Applicants must exhibit commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking.

For further information or to apply, contact **MCC Personnel Services** at **(717) 859-1151** or **inq@mcc.org** in the United States or **MCC Canada Human Resources** at **(204)261-6381** or **prs@mennonitecc.ca** in Canada.

Colombia church

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through the Ministry of Education, to shut down the seminary and its Hacedores de Paz (Peacemakers) program, which exempts students from compulsory military service.

"We are grateful to God that through much work nationally and internationally, we won the case," says Angulo. "There was much celebration about answered prayer. God has been faithful."

"The anniversary celebration was a time to think soberly and clearly about our past, to analyze the present and to project for the future," says Lozano. "It was good for us to remember that the initial formation of the church in Colombia had to do with serving marginalized people—specifically, children of lepers. Those marginalized children have come to be leaders in church and society.

She says, "It is also important to think about the many ministries the church has been able to develop: a home for seniors, schools for poor children, a community development agency, a Christian bookstore, a center for peace, justice and noviolent action, a seminary, a publishing house and resource center, a retreat center and camping ministry."

"It was a good feeling," says Klaassen, "to see what has been accomplished and acknowledge God's goodness out of very humble beginnings." *Melanie A. Zuercher*

"People who give generously to charity are not necessarily those who can afford it," writes Tim Stafford in the May 19 issue of *Christianity Today*. "In fact, the weakest givers (giving the lowest proportion of their income) are those making from $40,000 to $100,000 per year. The two groups that give the highest percentages of their income to charity or church are those who make less than $20,000 a year and those who make more than $100,000. (*The Marketplace*)

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The Russian parliament has sent a bill to President Boris Yeltsin establishing the primacy of the Russian Orthodox Church and limiting rights of other religions. On June 18 the parliament passed a law on "freedom of conscience and religious associations" that takes away the legal rights of religious organizations less than 15 years old, affecting hundreds of churches, seminaries and charities started since the country "opened" in 1992. Orthodox Church leaders lobbied hard for legislation to stop proselytizing by Protestant and Catholic groups. (*Mennonite Reporter* and *Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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First Mennonite Church in Edmonton met for a final service at the building on 76th Avenue that had been its home for 31 years. Worship on June 22 began there, then moved southeast to the new building on 91st Street. The move happened during Edmonton's rainiest days so far this year, so the congregation had to ford streams and deal with mud at the new site. Four people carried the cross, pulpit Bible and guest book from the old sanctuary to the new one. The congregation followed with the hymnals. First Mennonite hosted an open house Aug. 17, and will have a dedication service Oct. 5. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

Reviews

FILMS

TUPELO HONEY

Ulee's Gold, *written and directed by Victor Nunez, produced by Sam Gowan and Peter Saraf*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

Ulysses "Ulee" Jackson (Peter Fonda) wants only to get far enough away for nothing else to touch him. A Vietnam veteran who alone of a group survived a deadly attack, Ulee also grieves the death of his wife several years earlier. His only son Jimmy (Tom Wood) is in jail for bank robbery, Ulee is estranged from his old friend the sheriff (J. Kenneth Campbell) because of that, and no one has heard from Jimmy's wife, Helen, for almost two years. Ulee lives quietly in the Florida panhandle with his granddaughters, Penny (Vanessa Zima) and Casey (Jessica Biel), and spends his days and, during honey harvest, his nights working alone with his bees in the tupelo marshes.

But the world reaches in to seize Ulee once again when Helen (Christine Dunford) turns up in Orlando strung out on drugs and in the company of Jimmy's former partners in crime, Eddie Flowers (Steven Flynn) and Ferris Dooley (Dewey Weber). Ulee is the only one who can retrieve Helen, and it turns out Eddie and Ferris intend to use both of them, plus Penny and Casey, to get to some long-hidden robbery money.

Despite its violent subtext, the movie never degenerates into it. Ulee may have been a soldier, but he came out of Vietnam alive, he tells Penny, because he was "tricky." And wits—never violence of words, fists or weapons—are what he uses to save Helen and to free his family from the menace of Eddie and Ferris. A key moment in the film comes when Ulee has a clear shot at getting his hands on Eddie's gun and sends it spinning into the swamp instead, even though he is still not out of danger.

Orion Pictures

Low hum: *Peter Fonda is a bee-keeper who has put his emotions in storage.*

Hope creeps into Ulee's life as gently as the low hum of the bees on a late summer afternoon—in a glass of water handed him by Helen, who days earlier had screamed accusations at him as she came out of her drug haze; in the drawings that Penny brings home from school of her visit to the beehives with her grandfather; in the appearance of Casey (who had previously deliberately broken curfew with her cruiser boyfriend) in the shed in the middle of the night to help process the honey; and in the aptly named neighbor Connie Hope (Patricia Richardson, best known for her role on TV's "Home Improvement"), a nurse with her own past sorrows who helps restore Helen to health.

Ulee's gold is the prized tupelo honey, a family slowly putting itself back together and the choice he has of turning his face toward life instead of away.

BOOKS

A MISSED GIFT

Sacramental Cocoa: And Other Stories from the Parish of the Poor *by Lynn E. Perry (Westminster/John Knox, 1995, 164 pages, $13 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Lynn A. Miller, Chicago

As one who also lives and works amid Chicago's inner-city poverty, I was sure I would be interested in reading Lynn Perry's stories of her work at The Ministry, a north-side resource for the needy of that neighborhood. Her stories about the individuals she met and ministered to resonated with my own experience, and I share her frustration in trying to understand how these tragic and sometimes equally comic situations came to be and how best one can help. Perry writes about these people as one who loved as well as served them.

And that is probably the root cause of the problem with this book. Although it is entertainingly written, most of her stories left me with a "Huh?" response, a sudden deflation of my previously high emotional involvement. Perry ends her stories without much attempt at resolution or closure. Then, when these same characters show up three or four chapters later, it is as if they have walked into

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our lives for the first time.

Good editing might have tightened up the flow of the stories, as well as pushed the author to do some critical thinking about the situations she encountered. For example, what role does giving away food play in enabling personal irresponsibility or continuing addictions? When does the good feeling one gets from "serving the poor" begin to get in the way of the goals of that service? What are those goals?

As one who works for and among people like the ones about whom Lynn Perry spins tales, I know there are no simple or easy answers to these questions. But the precious gift of this experience demands that the questions be pondered. *Sacramental Cocoa* is an interesting book but missed a grand opportunity to do so.

LIFE ON THE STREET

Without Keys: My 15 Weeks with the Street People *by Pat McDonough (Terra Sancta Press, 1996, 393 pages, $24 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Peter Sprunger-Froese, Colorado Springs, Colo.

To a readership desperate for better understanding and moral direction in the face of the 1996 welfare reform law, this book is refreshing.

McDonough, the mother of two boys, presents in eminently readable style her variegated 15-week struggle in the winter of 1983-84 to access the Minneapolis social services system following the trauma of her divorce. Through journal entries and various vignettes of and by street people, McDonough narrates what daily life in pursuit of life's basic necessities can mean.

The author's spiritual gift toward the end of this saga is the sense that life with fewer trappings of conventional security, and the power of community with other "expendables," are freeing. In her spiritual journey, poverty (and all the bureaucratic logjams therewith) is a paradoxical reality, at once personal and social; freeing and binding; simple and complex; something to be advocated and also condemned as the worst form of violence.

McDonough's sociological, administrative and spiritual sophistication therefore permits no simplistic finger-pointing at street people. She reminds us that the social service/charity system—welfare checks, medicine, shelter, food and clothing distribution—can temper poverty's pain, yet its priority is control: to make sure structures remain unchanged and unimpeded. The system's ineptness does not adequately address poverty's causes—such as industrialism, automation, militarism, zoning laws and interest payments, the lack of adequately-paying jobs for all, racism and greed. When we institutionalize our response to poverty, we increase the system's ineptness, even while distancing ourselves from its victims.

Thanks, Pat McDonough. Homelessness is indeed a circumstance, not a personality trait and not "their" problem. It belongs to each of us and must be unmasked and denounced in all its oppressive mechanisms and then eradicated by both personal and structural change.

Resources

- **Pass the Bread** is a resource packet from Christian Peacemaker Teams that invites families, groups and churches to join Haitian workers in calling on Disney and its subcontractors to stay in Haiti and pay a decent wage (see page 15). The packet includes background information, worship resources and suggested actions and is available from CPT, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680; (312) 455-1199; fax (312) 666-2677; e-mail cpt@igc.org.
- **Caution: Children at Work** is a study/action guide exploring child labor around the world and its consequences, with an action insert to help people respond to the issue. Order from Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515-0968; 30¢ U.S. each or four for $1.
- **Church World Service 1998 Global Calendar and greeting cards** can be ordered (prepaid) from Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515-0968; calendar is $20 U.S., set of 10 cards is $10. Three calendars sent to one address get a free set of 10 cards.
- **The Year of Jubilee: 75th Anniversary of Buhler Mennonite Church** contains the history, including more than 100 photos, of the Buhler (Kan.) Church. Available for $8 U.S. postpaid from Buhler Mennonite Church, 220 W. Ave. B., Box 188, Buhler, KS 67522.
- **The Dawn Will Break: Table Devotions for Advent** by Rose Mary Stutzman (Herald Press, 1997, $5.99 U.S./$8.55 Cdn. plus shipping) is a 40-page booklet for family worship, including daily Bible readings, Bible stories, song and questions for reflection.
- **Saints, Sinners & Angels** by Danny Unrau (Kindred Productions, 1997, $7.95 U.S./$9.95 Cdn.) is a collection of stories about finding God in "fallen humanity." Order from Kindred Productions, 1-800-545-7322; e-mail kindred@cdnmbconf.ca; or 315 S. Lincoln, Box V, Hillsboro, KS 67063; (316) 947-3151.
- **Naming the Sheep: Understanding Church Membership** explores, Should there be baptism without membership? Should there be communion without covenant? and more. It is produced by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and available for $10 Cdn. (plus shipping and GST) from CMC, 1-800-665-1954; (204) 888-6781; or fax (204) 831-5675 attn: Resources Commission.
- **Worship Anthologies 1, 2 and 3** contain a compilation of worship material used and tested by General Conference Mennonite Church congregations in Canada. The anthologies include calls to worship, prayers, reader's theater and more. Available for $15 (anthologies 1 and 2) and $20 Cdn. (anthology 3) plus shipping and GST from CMC Resources Commission, 1-800-665-1954; (204) 888-6781; or fax (204) 831-5675 attn: Resources Commission.

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Editorial

Do nothing in order to be something

Given our context, one of the most radical acts we can perform is to do nothing, to cease work and keep the Sabbath. Perhaps because it is so radical, it may also be one of the most difficult commandments for us to follow.

We live in a society that has made idols of success, accomplishments, doing something. To cease work, even one day a week, as God commands in Exodus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 5:14, goes against the grain of North American values. It raises images of "welfare bums," "lazy sluggards" or "good-for-nothings."

If we're honest, though, it goes against our grain, too. For Mennonites, who are known for hard work, service, doing good deeds, doing nothing is especially difficult. We like to quote the passages in the Gospels where Jesus criticizes the religious leaders who viewed the Sabbath commandment through such legalistic lenses. We like to dwell on the exceptions to keeping a strict Sabbath. But, as Edgar Stoesz asks in his article (page 7), Why are there so many oxen in the pit?

Or we may quote Isaiah 58, which says that true worship is "to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke" (58:6). But how many of us fail to keep a Sabbath because we are loosening bonds of injustice? Are we rather, as Marlene Kropf wonders (see page 11), in front of the TV or at a shopping mall?

Although Jesus confronted religious leaders who had made the Sabbath a legalistic way to exclude people they didn't like and to enhance their own status, he did not attack the Sabbath itself. It is clearly commanded in the Scriptures (the fourth of the Ten Commandments). Why then do we have so much trouble keeping it?

First, we resist a legalistic application of the Sabbath. Many grew up in households where the Sabbath was strictly kept. And in many communities, blue laws, which kept stores closed on Sunday, made it easier to stay at home. But these rules felt oppressive, and we don't want to be bound by legalism, so we've thrown the baby out with the bathwater.

Blue laws: Second, we have to admit that we are heavily influenced by our culture. Most stores are now open on Sunday, which may make it difficult for us to celebrate the Sabbath, but it should not deter us. Even with no blue laws to help them, Jews and Seventh-Day Adventists (on Saturdays) and Muslims (on Fridays) had to find ways to celebrate their Sabbath.

> *To counter that message deep within us that we are nothing unless we are doing something, we must practice doing nothing in order to learn that we are something.*

As with many other issues, we need to find creative ways to counter the influence of the broader culture. If we are committed to living here and not separating ourselves physically from the surrounding society, we must encourage each other to resist its effect on our behavior.

In North America we suffer from a sickness I call busyness. It is like an addiction: to be a real person, we believe, we must be busy, we must accomplish something. But this is directly opposed to the gospel, which proclaims God's love for us in spite of our deeds, be they good or bad.

To counter that message deep within us that we are nothing unless we are doing something, we must practice doing nothing in order to learn that we are something. Keeping the Sabbath will require courage in the face of society's frenetic onslaught. We will fail at times, but we must keep up the practice of both public and private Sabbath if we are to survive as faithful people of God.

Simple things like eating our meals together, as families or with friends, without rushing to keep an appointment, address the problem of busyness in helpful ways. (See Denise Preller's article, page 10, for more ideas.)

God's command to keep the Sabbath is for our good and for the good of the world. Can we believe that? *Gordon Houser*

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For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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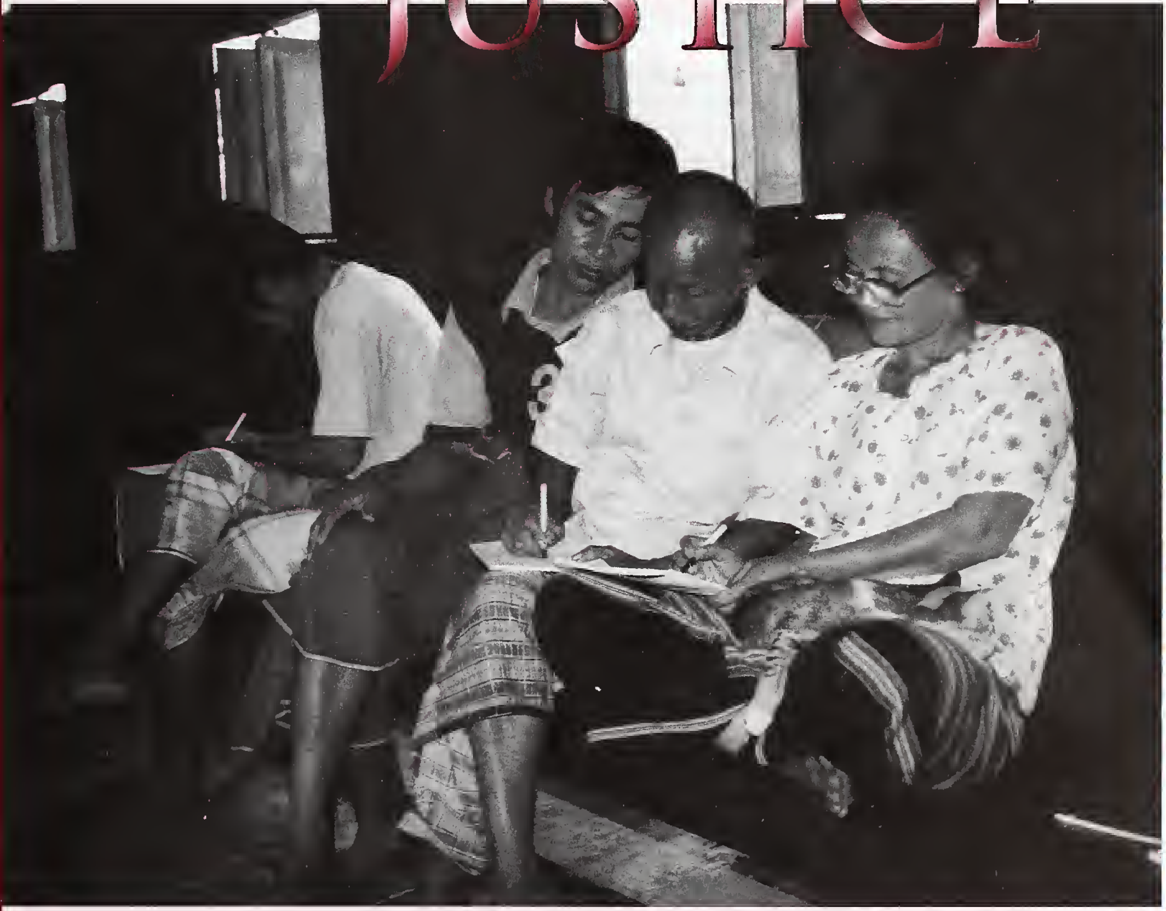
Teaching requires JUSTICE

- To teach amid oppression (page 3)
- Teaching is not as simple as it seems (page 8)
- The holy work of grading papers (page 9)



Educators in Burma identify the purpose of their schools.

Prologue

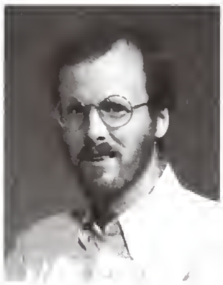
School has begun. This is often a time of newness, of beginning again. Whether it is in the context of public school, home school or Sunday school, students and teachers come to the fall with fresh energy to teach and learn.

In this issue we look at several different places where teaching and learning are happening. But in these different places we note a common theme. It is difficult to teach in situations of injustice.

Dana Selzer (page 3) tells about her invitation to work with the Karen people in Burma, to help them develop their education system. But soon after she left, those villagers' lives were completely disrupted by the Burmese military.

Emily Appleby Grizzard (page 8) discovered that teaching literacy in Appalachia can be difficult—not because the people don't want to learn but because they often have other problems that make learning nearly impossible. Until those problems are addressed, people will not be able to learn to read.

Jonathan Larson confesses his change of heart about grading papers (page 9) while he was serving as a mission worker in Southern Africa.



You'll notice we have three pages of letters in this issue. Our policy is to print every letter we receive, though we may edit it for clarity or brevity. Letters are a way for you readers to be in dialogue. Keep writing. *gh*

Next issue: A refuge for the voiceless

Cover: Photo by Dana Selzer

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To teach amid oppression

Dana Selzer

The author went to Burma to help villagers develop their education system, but an oppressive government had other ideas.

Late last October an unusual e-mail request popped up on my computer screen. Max Ediger and Moe Kyaw from Bangkok, Thailand, wrote that they needed the assistance of a school curriculum worker for a short-term project. The curriculum project was to begin in January, on the Thai-Burma border with a group of educators.

The moment I read that e-mail message I felt a nudge to go. Because of the short time frame, I found myself committing to the project before I knew much about it. I prayed and listened for God's leading, then said yes. Fortunately, my job as a curriculum director for a small school district in central Kansas allowed me that flexibility.

I wasted no time in investigating the project. I found that Max Ediger is a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker who co-founded Burma Issues, an organization that works at the grass-roots level to bring about peaceful change in Burma. The co-founder is Moe Kyaw. Burma Issues documents human rights abuses, provides training for grass-roots movements, and disseminates information to the rest of the world about what is happening in Burma. Burma Issues also was planning an education project with the Karen, one of the ethnic groups living near the Thai-Burma border.

As I prepared for the trip, I felt excited yet apprehensive. The work itself didn't scare me—it was what I did every day. But I wondered if I would be able to take what I knew about schools in Kansas and transfer that knowledge into a completely different context.

What worried me more, though, was

To teach amid oppression

Photo supplied by author

Kind, quiet people: *Karen teachers listen to new ideas about teaching.*

the political situation in Burma. My reading told me that Burma was made up of at least 67 separate, indigenous racial groups, each observing different religions, traditions and cultures. Until the British colonization in the 1880s, the area now known as Burma was not a unified land governed by a common ruler. It was the colonial government that drew the present boundaries and pronounced everyone inside that boundary Burmese. This meant that all ethnic groups were now expected to live as one nation. But pronouncing it so did not make it so. As you might expect, each ethnic group wanted to preserve its own traditions and cultural values.

Military crackdown: In 1948, Burma gained independence from Great Britain, and since that time the seven major ethnic groups (one of which is the Karen) have been fighting for independence from Burma's central government. In 1988, a pro-democracy movement swept the country, followed by a military crackdown. The State Law and Order Restoration Committee (SLORC) was formed to restore order.

In 1989, SLORC allowed multiparty elections and the pro-democracy party won 80 percent of the votes. SLORC, however, did not allow the new government to take power. Aung San Suu Kyi, the newly elected leader, was put under house arrest and to this day has not been allowed to take power. SLORC (now illegally in power) has not only been squelching the pro-democracy movement but has also been actively warring against the Karen and other ethnic groups in Burma. The Karen people, who live in the mountainous rain forest of southeastern Burma, were the people with whom I would be working.

As the day approached for my departure I was saddened to learn that Moe Kyaw would not be helping with the project; he had to leave suddenly for the United States, where he is seeking political asylum. I asked for the prayers of my congregation, Faith Mennonite Church, as I prepared for the trip. When the plane took off that Sunday morning, I felt an incredible sense of peace. Glancing down at my watch, I noted that it was 10:10 a.m.—five minutes until Sunday school classes dismissed for church. Had that sense of peace come from their closing prayers?

I spent several days in Bangkok at the Burma Issues offices before proceeding across the border into Burma. Once inside Burma, I talked with village leaders and schoolteachers, trying to get a sense of the local context before beginning my work with the Karen educators.

I found the Karen to be kind, quiet people. They spoke Karen, an agrarian language that lacks words for many of the concepts and objects that exist in the world today. Many also spoke limited English. The majority of the Karen in this area were Baptists.

Fleeing for their lives: The village in which I worked was under the control of the Karen military, the Karen National Union. It was safe to be there. However, SLORC was moving into Karen State farther north, where villages were being burned and people were fleeing for their lives. Those who remained or were caught were often conscripted into forced labor. A

Is the purpose [of schools in Karen State] to get students ready for a long-since-past British university system or to prepare Karen people to meet the needs of their society?

> ***Everyone in the villages fled to the Thai border, where males over the age of 15 were sent back into Burma to fight or surrender. Women, children and elderly were allowed to stay temporarily but were told they would be trucked farther south and sent back into Burma.***

growing Karen refugee population inhabited the border areas in Thailand. SLORC had made it clear that in the future those wanting to know about the Karen people would have to visit a museum.

I learned that foreign economic interests are fueling the removal of ethnic populations from their homelands. For example, gas pipelines built across Karen State are sanctioned by SLORC, which in turn clears out Karen villages to make way for the pipelines. These are pipelines owned by French and American companies: Total, Unocal and Texaco. The Thai government has been dealing with SLORC (an illegal government) to buy cheap gas via the pipeline. Money from these transactions is used to buy arms from China in order to continue the war on the ethnic populations.

The educational system in Karen State is a carryover from the British colonial system. Very little of the content is relevant to current local needs. Students are taught by rote, which leads to limited understanding. Students must pass tests at the end of each grade (standard) in order to move on. Only about 10 percent of the students graduate from the last standard (10th grade). Textbooks are outdated and inappropriate. Most teachers are expected to teach as soon as they have graduated from 10th standard; they receive no training.

There are many local needs the Karen themselves are ill equipped to handle: health care, teacher education, vocational training, community and economic development, to name a few.

In spite of all that was to be overcome, I found the 10 Karen educators with whom I worked eager to learn how to better prepare their children. We talked at great length about the purpose of schools in Karen State. Is the purpose to get students ready for a long-since-past British university system or to prepare Karen people to meet the needs of their society? The group overwhelmingly agreed that it was the latter. This led to the question, What do Karen people need to know and be able to do in order to meet those needs? The educators discovered that this is the point at which curriculum work begins.

In order to answer that question, the Karen educators created a survey process that will be used to gather information from their own people about their own local needs. It was

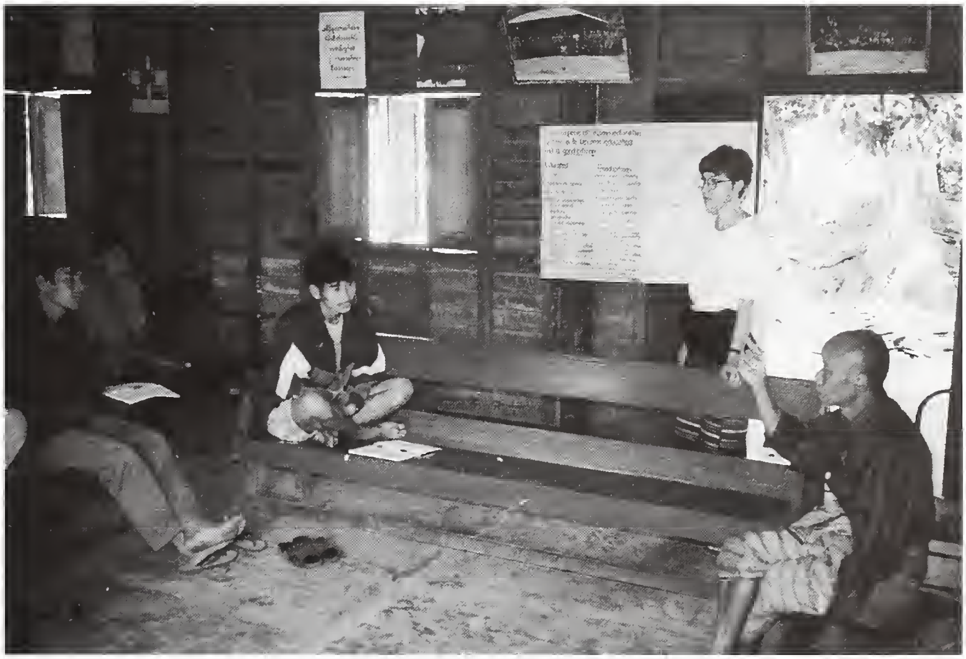
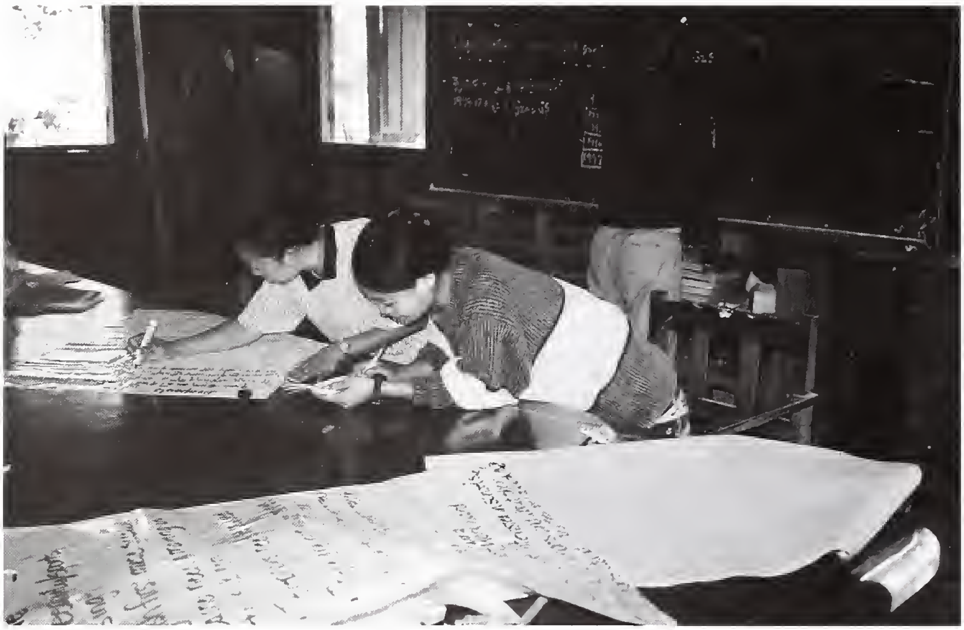


Photo supplied by author

Eager to learn: *Thra Charles (lower right) translates for Dana Selzer (standing).*



Energetic flow: *Karen educators compile potential survey questions.*

Photo supplied by author

exciting to watch the educators tackle the planning of this project. Those of us who did not speak Karen were left out—to have to stop and translate would have broken the energetic flow of their work. By the end of the week they had decided to use teams of high school students to conduct and compile the surveys. The teachers had designed a project that would not only gather the information they needed to begin major curriculum work but would begin teaching Karen students new and important skills. When I left the village of Htee Hkee, the educators were full of enthusiasm and hope. We agreed to meet together again in May to plan the next steps of the process.

Three weeks after I arrived home I got word that SLORC had swept farther into Karen State and taken the village of Htee Hkee and surrounding areas. Everyone in the villages fled to the Thai border, where males over the age of 15 were sent back into Burma to fight or surrender. Women, children and elderly were allowed to stay temporarily but were told they would be trucked farther south and sent back into Burma.

Two months since I was in Htee Hkee, Max Ediger reported that "the situation along the border is horrible. One cannot imagine that humans (in this case the Thai army) can treat refugees fleeing human rights abuses so badly. Refugees from Htee Hkee and Htee Hta are still living under small bits of plastic and sleeping on the hard ground. Relief agencies have not been given permission to provide them with thatch for simple roofing to protect them from the hot sun, or bamboo to make a floor to get them off the ground. Women give birth and care for their small children out in the open. This has been going on for over a month now. They live under the constant threat of forced repatriation. Visitors are not allowed in, especially

Resources on Burma

INDIA
CHINA
BURMA
LAOS
Bay of Bengal
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THAILAND
KAMPUCHEA
VIETNAM
Andaman Sea
Gulf of Thailand
BRUNEI
MALAYSIA
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA

Addresses for more information about Burma

There are many organizations around the world working on human rights and justice for Burma. Only a few are listed here. You can receive a more detailed list of addresses by contacting one of the addresses below.

Amnesty International
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ
England

Asia Watch
1522 K St. NW, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20005

Asian Human Rights Commission
Flat E 3/F Kadak Building
171 Sai Yee Street Mong Kok
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Burma Issues
P.O. Box 1076
Silom Post Office
Bangkok 10504, Thailand

Christians Concerned for Burma
P.O. Box 246
Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai 50202, Thailand

Forum-Asia
109 Suthisarnwinichai Road
Samsennok
Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320, Thailand

Images Asia
P.O. Box 2, Phrasingha Post Office
Chiang Mai 50400, Thailand

not journalists. Messages are smuggled out, so the issue does get into the news." Max further reported that the situation may be easing soon due to the outcry of Thai people.

I have followed the news of my Karen friends with a heavy heart. Of course, the education project is on hold now. We hope that one day soon SLORC will fall and the Karen and other ethnic groups will enjoy a democratic government. But that can happen only if those inside and outside Burma put pressure on the current government.

Pray for the oppressed people of Burma, for Max, Moe Kyaw and others who are working with them. Then put feet on your prayers and call or write your government officials and ask them to put economic pressure on the Burma (also called Myanmar) government. Stay informed about the situation in Burma. For more complete information, refer to the resources listed below.

Dana Selzer coordinates curriculum work for Marion, Kan., public schools and school improvement efforts for Hillsboro, Kan., public schools. She lives in Newton, Kan., where she is a member of Faith Mennonite Church.

A prayer for students

Donovan R. Graber

Lord, make us students of your peace.
Where there are people we cannot stand,
    let us ever try to love and understand;
  when there are times of suffering and grief,
    help us find our comfort and relief;
    as we are studying for what we want to do,
    may our lives be lived for you.
And Lord, grant that we may never seek
  so much to be rich as to share our richness,
  to be intelligent as to be considered wise,
  to be loved as to love our fellow students and teachers.
Lord, make us students of Jesus' way of life.
  It is in helping that we are helped,
  In counseling others that we are counseled,
  and in caring for others that we are like Christ.
Grant that we may never seek
  so much to live for ourselves as to live for you,
  to be so concerned with how well off we are
  that we forget for whom and why we really are.
Teach us to patiently learn
  the lessons of Jesus' way of life;
  and may our attention never turn
  as we become teachers of your peace in life. Amen.

By Donovan R. Graber from Prayers for Public Worship. *Copyright © 1986 Brethren Press, Elgin, Ill. All rights reserved. Used by permission.*

Addresses for actions

United Nations Center for Human
  Rights
Room 203
Geneva, Switzerland

United Nations High Commissioner
  for Refugees
154 Rue de Lausanne
CH 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Secretary General of the United
  Nations
U.N. Plaza
New York, NY 10017

General Than Shwe
SLORC
c/o Ministry of Defense
Signal Pagoda Road
Rangoon, Burma

Reading resources

Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity by Martin Smith (1991, Zed Books Ltd., 7 Cynthia St., London N1 9JF, England)

Burma in Revolt by Bertil Lintner (1994, White Lotus Co., GPO Box 1141, Bangkok 10501, Thailand)

Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy by Bertil Lintner (1990, White Lotus Co.)

Burma Issues. Monthly publication of Burma Issues, P.O. Box 1076, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504, Thailand; subscription is free

Burma: A Children's Rights Survey by Sara Brunnkvist (1996, Burma Issues)

Burma: The Alternative Guide by Burma Action Group (1996, Collins Studios, Collins Yard, Islington Green, London N1 2XU, England)

A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand by Asia Watch (1993, Asia Watch, 1522 K St. NW, Suite 910, Washington, DC 20005)

Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar by U.N. Special Rapporteur (Oct. 1994, U.N. Commission on Human Rights)

Myanmar: Human Rights Still Denied by Amnesty International (1994, Amnesty International, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, England)

Myanmar: Conditions in Prisons and Labor Camps by Amnesty International (1995, Amnesty International)

Burma Debate. Bimonthly publication available from P.O. Box 19126, Washington DC 20036.

Teaching is not as simple as it seems

Before this literacy volunteer could teach people to read, she had to deal with some barriers.

Emily Appleby Grizzard

It seemed simple and straightforward. People needed to learn to read. I could teach them. I began. Then I found out that people can't learn if they can't see well. Or if they are in physical pain. Or suffer mental anguish or depression or hopelessness born of manifest lack of opportunity.

One day I showed up for a lesson in a shack near the end of a hollow to find a disabled woman, Fern, trying to cook green beans over a barbecue stand in the house. Under the cloud of smoke I could see that she was burning bits of paper and twigs. The electricity had been turned off because she hadn't paid the bills.

Fern can't walk without a walker. She washes dishes by leaning her arms against the sink. Her husband, Ted, also has a disability; he spends their disability check on beer, so the couple often runs out of food money toward the end of each month. Despite her situation, Fern keeps herself clean and neat. She dresses in bright colors and has a cheerful face and shining black eyes.

Another student, Kay, had a painful, abscessed tooth and no money for the dentist. She was trying to heal herself by prayer. She cannot get medical assistance because her husband works. But they don't get full benefit of his wages because he has children by a former wife and is paying child support.

Keith, 22, had all his teeth pulled because they were rotten and they hurt. His medical card paid for the extractions, but the dental plates are not covered. He lives on mushy foods.

We lost Lily after three sessions. The welfare people took away her two babies because they were sick and she had no food in the house. The man who lived with her came home drunk and kicked in the door of the shack. They were evicted, and Lily moved to Tennessee.

Bernice is still in town but quit studying when her father became ill and she had to take care of him. Her mother died and "there was no one to look after Dad." The older two of her four daughters sometimes miss school because Bernice doesn't always wake up early enough to get them on the bus.

Teaching in Appalachia is not just teaching.

The local Christian social service agency paid the electricity bill for Fern and Ted when we contacted them. But

Teaching is not just teaching: *Mennonite Central Committee U.S. worker Emily Appleby Grizzard (right) with Diana, a literacy student in Mary Alice, Harlan County, Ky.*

MCC photo

Alcoholics Anonymous has not been successful with Ted, and Fern now has a badly infected leg from having dropped a hot coal on it.

Abscessed tooth: Kay was fairly easy. Through a local Mennonite physician I found a dentist who extracted her abscessed tooth. He said he would charge $25, payable as possible. But in the end there was no charge.

What can be done about Keith? I'm told if you wait too long after extraction the mouth changes, and then it is almost impossible to fit plates. But Keith is young and strong, and I think if he tried hard he could get odd jobs and save some money to pay for the plates. He does not seem to care much about that, but he is thankful for the chance to learn and tells us so after every lesson.

We found Lily's mother's address in Tennessee. I wrote a note suggesting she go to the library and find out about a literacy program near her.

Sometimes we stop at Bernice's house to encourage her to get back into the program. On one visit she told me her ailing father needed a mechanical chair so he could get up from a sitting position. The Sharing With Appalachia People coordinators took the chair to him, and found a dangerously rickety porch which they hope soon to fix.

Abbie, 64, began her studies with a previous Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) literacy worker. She does her homework faithfully and reads book after book. She gives me fresh vegetables from her garden. A few days ago she brought me mustard greens—already washed.

Marcie is a slow learner but is making progress. She writes the story of her life, bit by bit, by telling it to me. I print it out and teach her from that. She takes it home and copies it into her big notebook, and we reread it the next time we have a lesson.

Monday mornings I have a class of three women. They are not at the same level, and I try to focus on each one's special needs. What makes it possible, and fun, is that they help each other, and we all learn together.

The best thing about this assignment is my association with so many kind and helping people: the Catholic sisters involved in literacy and other helping services, medical workers who do their work without fees, pastors who let us talk to their congregations about volunteer literacy work, other literacy volunteers, a colleague who has been a friend and wise counselor, other MCC workers and the local Mennonite fellowship. And I thank MCC, which had confidence in me to give me this opportunity and to support me in this work—one of my life's most rewarding ventures.

Emily Appleby Grizzard worked in Appalachia with Mennonite Central Committee from 1990 to 1992. She lives in Ben Lomond, Ca. The names in this article, which she wrote in 1991, have been changed.

The holy work of grading papers

Jonathan Larson

Of late my life has been full of grading test papers, doing roll call and making out course certificates. I have suffered these indignities with scant patience. It makes me wince to think that the most practical course I could have taken in preparation for this stage of life and work would not have been "A Missiology of Oral Societies" or "Narrative Theologies of Southern Africa" but a straightforward community night class in calligraphy.

While hunched over a set of test papers, jabbing aggressively here and there with my red pen, I noticed that one of the take-home papers was badly smudged. Closer examination revealed the hand prints of a small child. This paper suggested the world attached to it: a family living in one or two crowded rooms in the shanty town called Old Naledi, where the neat isolation of a private office is unknown; where all of life, its spaces and experiences, are held in common; where study and prayer take place amid the bedlam of discos and rowdy all-night beer joints.

In fact, each paper had its own story to tell. Here was one with the tell-tale signs of spilled food and the ringlet left by a brimming teacup. Somewhere a single small table must suffice for cooking, meals and study. And here was one stained with wax. Somewhere a student was up in the winter darkness without even a paraffin lamp but spent scant resources to work by night with a candle and was so absorbed in the effort of shaping each written letter and trying to lift meaning off the written page that she or he barely noticed wax running onto the page, leaving its story there.

There was a last paper that had a suggestive sign: a paper partly charred in one corner. I wondered what happened here. Later that week I had my answer. As I drove some of the study group home after our weekly gathering, one of them told of a narrow escape from disaster. He had fallen asleep exhausted, forgetting to put out the candle in his room. In the night it toppled over and set the table and chair alight. He woke to find the room filled with smoke and his meager furnishings ablaze. He lost many of his belongings, but he somehow rescued his study papers, though barely.

Now, I confess, I don't care so much about those courses in missiology and theology. I am content to mark these papers. I have been humbled to read the signs they bear.

Jonathan Larson wrote this reflection in 1993 while serving in Southern Africa with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. He now lives in Atlanta, where he pastors Berea Mennonite Church.

Letters

SAME OLD MALE PRONOUNS

I appreciate that you confronted the complicated subject of inclusive language and what it means for the Mennonite churches today (July 22 issue). Yet, for the very arguments stated in the article itself, I was disappointed that the author used male pronouns to refer to God throughout "Language for Mission: Toward an Inclusive Church" (page 3). I see this as a serious oversight that speaks to the crux of the problems surrounding inclusive language.

I understand that nit-picking about every detail of language is cumbersome and can therefore distract us from our primary Christian tasks. And I also understand that some people separate the inclusive language discussion between talk about humanity and talk about God. But I do not make this distinction, nor does the author of the article try to make this distinction. The article states clearly, "God is greater than either maleness or femaleness," yet it continues to use male pronouns to refer to God. If anywhere, I think this article, when talking about God being beyond gender and what that says about the language we use, should be an example of close attention to language and make no exceptions to using inclusive language. One of the greatest challenges of inclusive language is to find new, or revive old, vocabulary to talk about God that is not always male-oriented. This article was an appropriate opportunity to exemplify creative language about God, but the author missed this chance and remained stuck in the same old male pronouns. While some people may get distracted by overly obnoxious inclusive language (and understandably so), I get equally distracted when male pronouns dominate talk and writing.

The few uses of male pronouns used in this article caused me to have trouble taking the discussion seriously. I am afraid that if we cannot be more careful than this when talking specifically about inclusive language, we cannot expect our congregations to do much better in changing how they write, talk and think about God. *Chad Martin, Goshen, Ind.*

IN PRISON

I would love more than anything to help by making a gift, and I will, but you see right now I am in prison, and don't even have the funds to get myself a Holy Bible, which I want more than anything, but even that I have to wait on until I am released from prison. My mom and dad passed away not long ago.

I am in prison because my loving wife, who I married when I was 16, got killed in a car wreck coming to the base where I was. She was going to have our third baby. I was in the U.S. Marines and could not get leave. [After her death] I just gave up on everything. I began drinking and going off base without leave (AWOL). The last time I was AWOL the police got after me and I ran them off the road. Luckily no one got hurt, but I ended up in prison.

I'm looking to get out next year. I've turned my life over to God because I saw the end and didn't like where I was headed. Thanks to God, for he used my mom and dad, along with a lot of others, to turn my life around toward God, where I know my wife and little baby are waiting for me.

I love reading *The Mennonite*. Its stories really touch my heart and you can see how God is working through each of us when we allow him to. I would like to receive any other book or such that you or anyone puts out. I can't get enough or see enough of God's good works. I also would welcome letters from anyone. *Edward Lee Lyttle, #231968 M-Bldg. Suite 12A, Powhatan Correctional Center, State Farm, Va.*

Editor's note: The Mennonite *sent Edward a Bible, but the prison refused it.*

EXCLUDED BY GCMC OFFICIALS

The editorial and news coverage of the [General Conference] special sessions at Winnipeg (July 22 issue, page 13) mentioned that gay and lesbian people and their supporters felt excluded by Immanuel Pentecostal Church (IPC). However, I think it's important to realize that this exclusion began with the General Conference Mennonite Church denominational leaders, not Immanuel Pentecostal Church.

The Supportive Congregations Network, a network of General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Church of the Brethren congregations and individuals that welcome lesbian, gay and bisexual members in their congregations, requested from the GCMC a workshop and display space, among other things, at Winnipeg '97. SCN was told that due to the limited space at Immanuel Pentecostal, only official programs of the General Board would be granted display space. But at Winnipeg there were other non-General Board programs displaying.

SCN's request for a workshop was "officially" denied by the GCMC. Therefore, SCN could not meet without the approval of IPC. It is my understanding that if the GCMC had approved the request for the workshop, it could have been held at IPC. Because of the GCMC unwillingness to provide full hospitality to its member congregations and individuals, they could not offer the second-class hospitality they usually extend to its gay, lesbian and bisexual members and their supporters (unofficial space—in this case a tent on the lawn at IPC) without the approval of IPC. This unofficial space was promised and then retracted two weeks before Winnipeg '97 without a public apology or an offer of assistance in finding alternative space from GCMC leaders.

In effect, GCMC leaders used Immanuel Pentecostal's lack of hospitality to not own forthrightly their own lack of hospitality to all GCMC congregations and members. *Jim Sauder, executive director, Brethren/ Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, Minneapolis*

WORK TO INCLUDE WOMEN

In your July 22 editorial on being inclusive, Robert Kreider's observation about the ratio of men to women who speak on the floor missed the more important issue. No one has excluded women from speaking during the open-mike sessions. It is more important to ask how the ratio of women delegates might be increased. This will be a continuing problem as small churches have only one or two delegates and the pastor is one of the people who should be in attendance. If delegates are appointed from a regional conference, there is the possibility of selecting a more equal number of both sexes.

Also, comparisons can be invidious. Rather than commenting on which conference has more women speaking from the floor, we should be asking how can we make it possible for more people (both men and women) to speak what is on their minds. The Mennonite Church during its delegate sessions at times has delegates from a region caucus to discuss an issue. In these smaller groupings women, and men, are more likely to speak their views than before the whole conference. Here is a method that would help us hear the voices of more people, both men and women.

Your conclusion that the century will end on Dec. 31, 2000, means that to have lived 100 years I will have to wait until I have lived to 100 plus 365 days. Doesn't the year I lived from day 1 until I was 1 year old count?

And by the way, the end of the second millenium has already occurred. Our calendar system is supposed to date from the time when Jesus was born. But it is commonly agreed that Jesus was born about 4 B.C. Thus the end of the millenium occured when we reached the year 1996. *David L. Habegger, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

SPIRIT ALIVE AND ACTIVE

One chilly day last March, Mike came to me and spoke with a certain gravity about his intense desire or vision to go to China. Mike was a part-time employee at Keystone Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center, where I am a part-time chaplain. At first I brushed off his intensity and determination as mere musings; however, before long I could see that Mike was serious about this matter. It seemed as if this vision of going to China had been hounding him for some time. Mike sought me out because he hoped a clergy member would have some mission connections to China.

I took down Mike's number and assured him I would call him back with more information. Edie Tschetter, Northern Tier Mennonite Central Committee representative, was quick to send me the listings of MCC openings. I called Mike immediately; he drove to my residence and we studied the openings, focusing particularly on the English teaching positions in China. I gave him Edie's number, and as he left my home he seemed relieved and grateful. That was in early April.

That was the last time I had any contact with Mike until July 26 when I opened our daily Sioux Falls, S.D., paper and saw a picture of Mike Huber. The article indicated that Mike had left for China July 24 on a two-year English assignment with MCC.

It seems that the Holy Spirit was stirring Mike to make this step. God's Spirit is alive and active. When the apostle Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth," that's what seemed to happen in this situation.

I'm thankful that MCC is willing to take qualified Christian people from various denominations. Mike is a member of a Lutheran church in Sioux Falls. We are spiritually rich when love is our central aim, and of course Jesus said, "Everyone (believers and nonbelievers) will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." *Dave Waldowski, Sioux Falls, S.D.*

UNDISCERNING INCLUSIVENESS

Some comments on recent articles:

I don't care whatever name adjective the denomination chooses, but the noun should be "churches," not "church." In the Bible a church is the gathering of believers; a whole local congregation, all believers in a region or all believers whatsoever. A rather arbitrary selection of some Christian congregations, neither including nor representing all Mennonites, far less all Christians, should not arrogate to itself the term "church" in the singular.

Your articles on Israel tourist trips (July 8 issue) were outstanding. It is a disgrace that U.S. Christians should so ignore fellow believers in the Holy Land while we pour millions into the coffers of the government that persecutes them.

The articles on pastoral ministry (June 10 issue) were not bad; at least free of the whining we sometimes hear. Pastors have in the late 20th century all the power and authority we need in order to carry out the task we are called to. A clear call from God and a definite Bible message will stiffen our backbone so we don't have to wheedle and beg for respect.

The editorial on "including" (July 22 issue) was a disservice to clear thinking. What doubtful utility the term "inclusiveness" once had is long past. It is an entirely shapeless and insipid term. You record the complaint of people who flaunt their homosexual practices that they feel excluded, but [you] seem on some grounds or other to exclude racists and "homophobes" yourself. Does inclusiveness also take in embezzlers on the staff of Bethel College or adulterers on the faculty of Eastern Mennonite Seminary? If not, why not? Let us call undiscerning inclusiveness what it is. It is a pathology—the same pathology we see in individuals who are not able to draw boundaries and say no. The root of both pathologies, corporate and individual, is the same: no self-respect. A congregation, a conference, a denomination that will cringe and cavil at any discipline of even the most blatant sin has lost its self-respect. *Monty Ledford, Aberdeen, Idaho*

TREATMENT OF JEWS

With deep sympathy I have read the story about Ernest Sirluck, ("Mennonite anti-Semitism," by Dora Dueck, July 22 issue, page 9) and what treatment he got from us Mennonites. In contrast to this I want to tell you stories about other Jewish and Mennonite children.

I was born in the Ukraine, Soviet Union, in the village of Mariawohl. My parents had one house that they lived in and another that they rented to other people. As long as I can remember, Jewish people always lived in that house. The last family that lived in the house was a tailor, his wife and five children. During their stay, two more children were born. During those days, a baby was born at home. Older children in the family were taken to the neighbors and stayed with them for two or three days.

Each time during a birth in the Jewish family, the older children were brought to our house. These children were treated just as well as we. After breakfast they walked along with us to school and came home with us. In school they got the same treatment as we Mennonites did, except for religious education, in which they did not take part. As far as I know, all the Jewish children that lived in other villages got the same treatment.

continued on next page

LETTERS *continued*

My uncle John Wichert traveled on a steamer to Canada in 1925. At one time he got to know a gentleman and told him, "I do like the Jewish people, they gave us Christ the Redeemer." *N.N. Fransen, Vineland, Ont.*

THE NEW WEDGE ISSUE

Those of us fortunate enough to have an inclusive life experience find it difficult to understand the aggressiveness against homosexuals. We are, however, aware that "wedge issues" are needed to keep contributions flowing into the coffers of many TV/radio evangelists. Books, tapes, videos, change therapies all bring in money. The messages seem to follow basic themes that create the needed fear and repulsion: homosexuality is a "godless evil" and will destroy us; lurid sexual acts occur *only* in the homosexual community; all homosexuals are promiscuous; homosexuals can/must change their orientation as it is dysfunctional or an evil choice. The Bible is used as it was regarding slavery and racism. There is little awareness of what can happen when a group of people are seen in this way—Hitler gassed thousands of homosexuals as part of his "purification." We are in awe of the many homosexuals in our churches who quietly watch the scenario being played out, and continue to remain with us in patience and forgiveness. *Lo Smucker, Bluffton, Ohio*

A MILITARY MENNONITE

Recent Mennonite publications have had numerous articles and letters to the editor regarding active military people becoming members of Mennonite churches. One minister refers to this problem as causing "creative tension." Several letters have said, very simply, get out of the military or don't come to our church.

I'm not sure whether I am a military Mennonite or a Mennonite military person. You see, I am a captain in the Corps of Engineers, Army of the United States (retired) with 53 years total service. I have also been a member of a General Conference Mennonite church for 54 years.

As an officer commissioned by Congress in 1945, I have served as commander of units as small as eight people and as large as 200. I have served overseas in the South Pacific and on 12 Army installations in the United States. From 1964 to 1996 I had a mobilization designee assignment from the Pentagon. I remain available for recall until my death.

As a member of my church I have participated in various ways. I taught Sunday school many years and served as church treasurer and chair of church council several terms. I assist in Sunday worship services occasionally.

One could ask, Why would a Mennonite like myself voluntarily remain associated with the military for over a half-century? I answer, for the same reasons that volunteer fire fighters, EMTs and law enforcement officers do what they do. We believe that by such volunteerism we render a service and it makes us better people.

The question really is, Are military people a threat to the church? The eight pastors I have had always made me feel welcome in the church. I believe there is room for all of us at the Communion table. My experience in our church tells me this is so. *Ronald V. Woelk, Hutchinson, Kan.*

A BLOW TO THE MIDSECTION

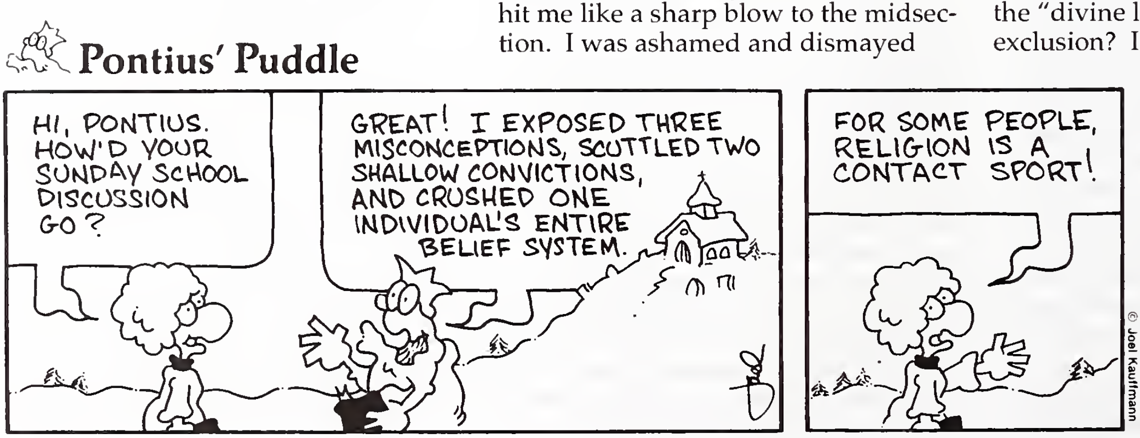
Dora Dueck's article ("Mennonite Anti-Semitism," July 22 issue, page 9) hit me like a sharp blow to the midsection. I was ashamed and dismayed that anyone could use Christianity and especially the Mennonite tradition to justify such behavior. It shreds the "people of peace" image we like to wrap ourselves in.

It reminded me that when the lessons of history are not heeded, history is bound to repeat itself. I wonder how many people today are "being hated, not for what he did, but for who he was" by Mennonites in North America? It was impossible for me to read this story and not see parallels to our church's current treatment of gay and lesbian Christians.

What is the correct position for the church on this topic? I honestly do not know. Our biblical scholars do not agree. Our denominational leaders have varying opinions. Our churches and their members are far from consensus. It is possible (and popular) to argue with vehemence for the biblically sanctioned, God-ordained exclusion of homosexual people. However, similar arguments were used—with equal interpretive arrogance—for slavery during the Civil War, for Jewish annihilation in Nazi Germany, for the prohibition of interracial marriage during the civil rights movement and for women's subjugation since time began. What pushes us to judge, to fortify our boundaries? Is it a desire for obedience or is it the human fear of those who are different? As a faith community rooted in a tradition that has suffered much for "being different" one would think we'd have a bit more compassion.

Is a fight for "certainty" on this issue a risk we need to take—with God or posterity? Let us learn from the stories of our own painful history of anti-Semitism (and racism and sexism). Should we not cling first to Christ's great commandment to love, learning to live (for now at least) with our human inability to fully comprehend the "divine legalities" of inclusion/exclusion? Is it not better for us to stand together in final judgment convicted of loving rather than biblical presumption?

I pray that 30 years from now my grandchildren will not read with horror more stories of the bigotry and ignorance of their Mennonite forebears of the 1990s. *Mark A. Regier, Elkhart, Ind.*


Pontius' Puddle
HI, PONTIUS. HOW'D YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL DISCUSSION GO?
GREAT! I EXPOSED THREE MISCONCEPTIONS, SCUTTLED TWO SHALLOW CONVICTIONS, AND CRUSHED ONE INDIVIDUAL'S ENTIRE BELIEF SYSTEM.
FOR SOME PEOPLE, RELIGION IS A CONTACT SPORT!
© Joel Kauffmann

Ex-paramilitary man champions justice now

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—There's no place like prison to think through a philosophy of life—especially when single-minded devotion to a cause led to imprisonment in the first place.

Billy Mitchell of Belfast, Northern Ireland, belonged to a Protestant paramilitary organization when a judge recommended 25 years in prison for his part in a political killing.

That was in 1976. Mitchell was released in 1990 after serving 14 years.

Now he is again active in the community—this time as a leader of reconciliation, not division.

Mitchell says Mennonite literature—particularly John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus*—and, later, staff people affiliated with Mennonite organizations, including Joe Campbell, John Paul Lederach, Ron Kraybill and Howard Zehr, played a role in his transformation.

In May, Mitchell and Philomena, his wife, attended a course on restorative justice taught by Zehr and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) sponsored his course attendance.

Mitchell also spent a week looking at community-based development initiatives in Washington and getting to know staff of the MCC U.S. service program there.

Mitchell says he spent his first three years in prison researching and reflecting on the various theories of human relationships—social, economic and religious. "A lot of these theories sounded good, but at the end of the day I felt they put doctrines ahead of people," Mitchell says. "I concluded that the best philosophy of life is to eat, drink and be merry—to live for yourself. Deep down inside, though, another part of me said there has to be more, there has to be some meaning and purpose. But where does it come from?"

Liberal theology: Although he began to read the Bible, Mitchell had difficulty with Christianity. The fundamentalism in which he had been raised "emphasized dotting every 'i' and crossing every 't,' rather than love," he says. "Liberal theology, though, preached Christ's love but rejected other biblical teachings, such as that Jesus was the Son of God."

One evening Mitchell watched a

Joe Campbell

Restoration: *With her husband, Billy, looking on, Philomena Mitchell shares her learning with a group in Belfast, Northern Ireland, after participating in a course on restorative justice.*

Inside the news

MCC worker starts Nicaragua retreat center / p. 15

Commentary: New wine, old wineskins and Oslo's 'peace' / p. 16

Worker raises funds to help furnish church / p. 17

Peacemaker discusses prospects for Northern Ireland / p. 18

The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund will celebrate its 25th anniversary Oct. 23 in Washington. For information on the event, contact NCPTF, 2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington, DC 20008-1923.

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An Aid to Christian Teaching teacher training weekend will be held Oct. 31-Nov. 2 at St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Sask. An ACT weekend is an interactive, intense training conference for Sunday school teachers. For information, call Ken Hawkley at (614) 766-0976.

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Murray Hiebert, Steinbach, Man., a former Mennonite Central Committee worker in Southeast Asia and now bureau chief for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was found guilty of contempt May 30. Hiebert published an article in January about the Malaysian judiciary, suggesting a lawsuit had moved quickly through the court because the plaintiff's husband was a judge. Hiebert was to be sentenced Sept. 4. He served with MCC in Vietnam 1973-76, in Laos 1976-78, and in the MCC Washington Office 1979-1986. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

Mennonite Mutual Aid's Praxis Growth mutual fund was included in a *USA Today* article on July 2 focusing on socially responsible investing. Praxis was listed in a chart with three other funds, including Dreyfus Third Century, illustrating funds "doing well while doing good." (*USA Today*)

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Vacation Bible school participants at Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church were part of a "Tour de Faith." The 47 participants biked to various sites in Hesston to meet with adults who told their personal faith stories. Orange safety flags with "Tour de Faith" were mounted on each bike. Children watched part of the 1989 Tour de France video while eating lunch. (*Gospel Herald*)

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Three men from Yemen have filed a lawsuit against NASA for landing on Mars. The men claim to own the planet. "We inherited the planet from our ancestors 3,000 years ago," an Arabic paper quoted them as saying. They want immediate suspension of all Sojourner and Pathfinder operations on Mars, and for NASA not to disclose any information about Mars' atmosphere, surface or gravity before getting their approval or until a verdict is reached. (*The Wichita Eagle*)

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Duane M. Sider, assistant professor of church ministries at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., resigned his teaching position and relinquished his ministry credentials after admitting to sexual misconduct. Sider admitted to several extramarital relationships over an extended time while serving as a faculty member. The Faith and Life Commission of Virginia Mennonite Conference affirmed Sider's acknowledgement of wrong-doing and his desire for forgiveness and restoration of broken relationships. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

documentary on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian and spokesperson for the Confessing Church, the center of German Protestant resistance to the Nazi regime. Bonhoeffer believed the church's role was to imitate Jesus by "sharing in God's sufferings in the world." He was imprisoned and executed by the Nazis for his part in a plot to assassinate Hitler.

"Something spoke to me," Mitchell says of the documentary. "Subsequently I read just about every book about Bonhoeffer and found a fellow Christian I could identify with. His Christianity had none of the harshness or coldness I had known. Yet his faith also prepared him to stand up to the Nazis and to pay for doing so."

Following his discovery of a Christianity he could embrace, Mitchell also read about other faith traditions, including Anabaptism.

While he does not describe himself as a pacifist, Mitchell says he is heading toward Christian beliefs that, "while not yet worked out completely," encompass restorative justice.

Mitchell would like to apply restorative justice concepts to social, economic and ecological justice—to healing communities, not just individuals. He is currently working at a program of prisoner reintegration into society in Northern Ireland. Most prisoners are political and that casts the meaning of restorative justice in a different light.

Howard Zehr notes the importance of the seminar for Mitchell's wife, Philomena. It offered her an opportunity to discuss her struggles waiting for her husband's release from prison while raising their two children—now in their early 20s—on her own.

Zehr says the summer course—an introduction to restorative justice and victim offender conferencing—unexpectedly brought together a "remarkable confluence of people who don't usually get into the same room and talk to one another": several ex-prisoners, several victims, two prisoners' wives, a chief probation officer and several state-level victim advocates. *Emily Will*

Blanketed with compassion

Fidele Lumeya

Bukavu, Congo—This man and the approximately 65 other residents of Provivi, a locally started hospice for the elderly, were among those who received Mennonite Central Committee-donated blankets.

"The blankets are giving a little well-deserved comfort to some forgotten and abandoned people," says MCC volunteer Krista Rigalo, who helped with distribution. Provivi residents sleep on mats on the ground.

Last fall, as civil war swept across Zaire, MCC appealed for blankets for war victims. (Zaire is now called Democratic Republic of Congo.) Supporters responded generously with nearly 33,000 blankets.

The MCC-donated blankets went to street children, widows and families who lost possessions in the war, including members of Bukavu Mennonite Church. The church, planted about a year ago, survived the war and is growing; it now has around 100 members.

"These blankets are cherished for two reasons: They respond to need and they come from Mennonites in North America," says Rigalo. People appreciate that "our brothers and sisters thought of us in our hour of need."

MCC worker starts Nicaragua retreat center

Patastule, Nicaragua (MCC)—It was a day that Susan Classen has never forgotten.

She was caught in the middle of a bloody battle between the Salvadoran army and the guerrillas. With bullets flying around them, she and an army lieutenant took cover underneath a mud oven.

"I saw two soldiers killed that day," she says of the battle. Later that same day, she would return to the clinic where she worked as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer, only to find the place filled with wounded guerrillas.

"That day I had a glimpse at evil and death that I had never seen before," she says.

Her emotion was not fear of death, she says, but the realization "that even giving my life would not have made a difference there."

It wasn't that Classen felt helpless or without hope, she says. Instead, the experience left her with a new understanding that the evil of this world was not buried deep beneath the ground, but was close to the surface.

At the same time, she realized that the resurrection of Christ was just as close.

"When I look into the abyss of violence and evil, that is where resurrection is," says Classen, who has served 16 years with MCC. "I can't know resurrection or joy unless I am able to face that abyss. If I want to experience joy, it is tied up with pain."

Her El Salvador experience led Classen to seek ways to be "living the truth and not wasting energy on what we know does not bring joy."

One way she is attempting this is through her current MCC work, which involves building a spiritual retreat center in the small desert village of Patastule.

The center, called "The Garden in the Desert," is a place for people living in stressful situations, both Central and North American, to find space for prayer and reflection, she says.

Unlike many retreat centers, The Garden in the Desert is not located on top of a hill or in a secluded part of the country. Instead, it is at the end of a row of mud houses sitting along the banks of a river where village women wash their clothes and bathe.

The setting is simple and basic. The house has two small guest rooms, and no electricity or running water. Hammocks hang on the porch and mosquito netting covers the beds at night.

Opening a retreat center may be an unusual assignment for an MCC volunteer, but for Classen it is a continuation of the journey she began in El Salvador. She left there after the war ended with some feelings of disillusionment.

"In El Salvador, I wanted to have an impact," she says. "But I learned I wasn't expected to have an impact—my neighbors didn't expect it and they loved me anyway."

In Patastule, the poor are again showing Classen the way. "I don't romanticize poverty or the poor, but I think because they don't have options, it keeps them grounded," she says.

"Day to day, life tells them they are not in control. I have had to deal with learning that I am not in control."

At first, Classen was not sure how the community would respond to a North American woman establishing a retreat center in their midst. But acceptance has not been a problem, she says. In fact, the small community has offered her plenty of understanding and encouragement.

Mark Beach

Resurrection: *Susan Classen stands in front of the retreat center she recently opened in a small village in Nicaragua.*

She believes the center will offer different things to different people. For Central Americans, it may be a place of prayer and reflection. For North Americans it may be a chance to simply retreat and get away.

"This environment is not [intended as] a place [for] escape," she says. "This [provides] a way of [being here] more deeply." *Mark Beach*

Participants in Mennonite Retirement Trust can now decide where their pension dollars are invested. Mennonite Mutual Aid's investment choice program lets MRT participants customize retirement plans, allotting their money in any of five investment funds offered. The funds reflect socially responsible investing that supports Christian stewardship and Anabaptist values. (*Mennonite Mutual Aid*)

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The Reformed Church in America will offer Generation Why and Fast Lane Bible Studies, published by Faith & Life Press for senior high and junior high youth respectively, as curriculum choices in its catalog. The RCA has about 1,200 congregations. And Friends United Meeting, based in Richmond, Ind., is offering Generation Why material. Friends United Meeting sends curriculum resources to about 500 congregations. Generation Why is also endorsed by the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., and has the "seal of approval" from the denominational youth minister for the American Baptist Church. (*GCMC News Service*)

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The Royal Ulster Constabulary honored John and Naomi Lederach, Mennonite Central Committee workers in Northern Ireland, for their work with the constabulary, Northern Ireland's police force. The Lederachs helped design and implement a community awareness program within the police force. The program's goal is to enhance police sensitivity to the feelings of the citizens in their divided society. While the force is 93 percent Protestant, they police a population that is 40 percent Roman Catholic and 60 percent Protestant. The Lederachs say it is difficult to know what difference their training made, but they did notice small changes in the language the police used—becoming more neutral and impartial—and an increased awareness of differing cultural practices within the Catholic and Protestant communities.

"After Awareness: Preventing Abuse by Creating Healthy Communities" is the theme for the national conference of the Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute, to be held June 8-10, 1998. ISTI invites victims, advocates, trainers, offenders and others to submit proposals for presentations on "Clergy Sexual Misconduct" and "Creating Healthy Communities of Faith." For information contact Roman Paur, executive director, Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute, Collegeville, MN 56321; (320) 363-3994; fax (320) 363-3954; e-mail isti@csbsju.edu; or www.osb.org/isti/.

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Yakov Krasnovsky, a Russian Orthodox Christian, is in an Israeli jail because he is a conscientious objector. He refuses to serve in the Israeli army despite facing five years in military prisons. Yakov, 21, emigrated with his family from Byelorussia to Nazareth in 1991. Upon refusing military service last February he was sentenced to 14 days in prison. Required to report again on May 8, he again refused to serve and was sentenced to 70 days. When he is released, he will have 24 hours to report to the Induction Center and will likely be imprisoned again. In Israel, military service is not only mandatory but essential for getting most jobs and good mortgage terms. Since the Likud party took power, obtaining military exemptions on conscientious grounds has become virtually impossible. Israeli law recognizes exemptions based on conscience for women but not for men. The law also grants exemptions on religious grounds to Jewish yeshiva students, who study the Torah. However, there is now talk of eliminating that exemption by setting up a program where yeshiva studies are interspersed with military duties. A new organization, Conscientious Objectors in Israel, was recently formed to advocate on behalf of COs like Yakov. They can be reached at silverb@netvision.net.il, attention: Mikhail Krasnovsky. (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

Team beams over sunny finish

MESSIAH
COLLEGE

Messiah College photo

Messiah College's solar racing team finished 12th out of 36 and earned the top technical award in Sunrayce '97. Sunrayce is a 10-day, 1,240-mile intercollegiate competition held every two years. The only Christian college entry in Sunrayce, the Grantham, Pa., school's team called itself Genesis.

Sunrayce began this year on June 19 in Indianapolis and ended June 28 in Colorado Springs, Colo. Genesis was first among Pennsylvania's other entries, from the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University, and significantly bested its 22nd place finish in Sunrayce '95.

The Messiah College team received its second-in-a-row Renaissance Innovation Award, the race's top award honoring the team who developed the most innovative technical achievement on its solar vehicle. Genesis earned the prize for its motor optimization system.

COMMENTARY

New wine, old wineskins and Oslo's 'peace'

Editor's note: *Kathleen Kern, Rochester, N.Y., is currently serving with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron, West Bank.*

"Nor do people put new wine in old wineskins; if they do, the skins burst and then the wine runs out and the skins are ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh skins; then both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17).

The situation continues to deteriorate here in Israel and Palestine. [Several weeks ago] two suicide bombers blew themselves up in Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda marketplace (which CPT Hebron members often pass on their way to the central bus station.) [Recently] we witnessed yet another home demolition and watched a young husband and wife hold each other, weeping, as they sat among the wreckage of their house.

Bill Clinton, Madeleine Albright, the Israeli Labor party and others talk about the need to get the Oslo process back on track, as though only Oslo can bring peace to the Middle East.

What most of the world does not know is that far-sighted Israelis and Palestinians knew Oslo was doomed from the outset. In 1993, shortly after Arafat and Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn, Yacov Ben Efrat wrote this in *Challenge* magazine:

"By calling an end to the "Intifada" ['uprising' by Palestinians] and changing its charter, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has cashed in its bargaining chips. It has nothing more to offer. There will be no reason for Israel to make further concessions. Thus 'first' is also last. Interim is final. … The ultimate sovereignty [of Jerusalem and the West Bank] remains Israeli. Israel's security needs will dictate priorities, and the local authorities had better comply if they wish to stay in power. … If [Arafat] succeeds in crushing the opponents of the occupation … then the second phase will come: a cosmetic autonomy in the West Bank. … Here is a turning point indeed, when the PLO itself assumes the role of imposing an unacceptable solution on its own people. It is a turning point that can only lead to chaos and oblivion."

Jesus' metaphor about new wine and old wineskins seems particularly apt in a discussion of the Oslo "Peace Process." (What peace? What process?)

Progressive Palestinians and Israelis have a new wine in mind when they talk about peace. Its key ingredients include identical human rights for Israelis and Palestinians: no exceptions. They include friendship possible only between equals, and an accounting for the damage and deceit inflicted when the State of Israel was born.

The peace that these Israelis and Palestinians call for belies the myth that Israelis want security and Palestinians want a state. They know that both sides desperately crave security and that until all people are secure, no one in this small region will be secure.

The old wineskins of Oslo are not capable of holding the heady new wine that righteous Israelis and Palestinians are creating as I write.

The Oslo process preserves Israeli military, political and economic hegemony over the region. It makes human rights a special favor granted to Palestinians if they behave like good children. It makes no provision for a neutral monitoring party to determine Israeli and Palestinian compliance with the accords.

And as the rest of the world speaks of preserving Oslo, Palestinian land continues to be confiscated; Palestinian homes continue to be demolished; prisoners continue to be held without charge; propaganda continues to dehumanize all participants in the conflict and bombs continue to explode.

The old wineskins of Oslo have burst. Rather than trying to repair them, the rest of the world should look at the new wine and the new wineskins that Israelis and Palestinians who care about justice have to offer. *Kathleen Kern*

Worker raises funds to help furnish church

Winnipeg, Man. (GCMC)—Members of Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio, "gave up" their seats to try and gain some for Japanese Mennonites.

Grace is a mission partner congregation for Bill Derksen, Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) worker in Japan. COM is part of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Derksen spent some of his time during a recent North America Assignment trying to raise funds so that people at the Mennonite Christian Church in Oita, Japan, which he helps pastor, will have a place to sit.

The Oita church is in the midst of a building project that will result in a new sanctuary and pastor's residence. "They've been saving and planning for 10 years for this," Derksen says.

A house that Derksen's parents, Mary and Peter Derksen, longtime COM workers in Japan, built 30 years ago currently serves as the meeting place for the church and residence for pastor Junji Sasaki and his family. Says Derksen, "It's falling apart." Originally meant to house the Derksen family, it ended up being the church's meeting place as well.

"Oita is a small congregation, with an average attendance of 20," he says. "There's no extra money for anything, including chairs."

So Derksen has been seeking donations of chairs or money to buy them. "In Japan, the kind of chairs we want cost the equivalent of about $200 U.S., or $250 Cdn., apiece," he says. "They aren't fancy, but they're nice wooden chairs—we have some aesthetic considerations, too." The same chairs in Canada run $60-$100 Cdn. apiece.

"Our eventual goal is 50 chairs," Derksen says.

COM workers are allowed to raise

Dave Linscheid

Please be seated: *Bill Derksen, Commission on Overseas Mission worker in Japan, is trying to help the Oita church buy some chairs.*

Fairfield (Pa.) Mennonite Church is holding its 36th annual international gift festival Nov. 13-15 at the church. The sale, co-sponsored by Ten Thousand Villages, features oriental rugs and crafts from more than 35 countries. All proceeds from the sale will go to Ten Thousand Villages. For information, call (717) 642-8936, or www.cvn/~giftfestival.

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The board of Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz., announces the appointment of Jane Polingyouma as principal of the school. Polingyouma assumes the new position in addition to her current one as first grade teacher and Hopi language instructor. She replaces Sheila Giesbrecht. Last year, Polingyouma became the first full-time Hopi teacher at Hopi Mission School. Before she began working at Hopi Mission School, she taught in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools on the Hopi reservation for more than 20 years. (*GCMC News Service*)

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Wiley Drake, the pastor who helped spearhead the Southern Baptist Convention's boycott of Walt Disney because of its gay-friendly policies, was issued an injunction against allowing homeless people to sleep in an enclosed porch at his church. Drake, pastor at First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park, Calif., faces misdemeanor charges that he violated the city's anti-camping ordinance by letting homeless people sleep on church property. If Drake is found guilty, city officials plan to order all homeless people sleeping at the church, including those in trailers and cars in the parking lot, to leave the grounds. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

Graduate students pursuing careers in nursing are invited to apply for loans from the Miller-Erb Nursing Development Fund. The funding awards range from $1,000 to $2,000 per study year and contain forgiveness clauses for service and/or publication in Mennonite constituencies. Applications and supporting data must be received by Feb. 1, 1998. For applications, write to Amy Herr, Mennonite Health Services, 2160 Lincoln Highway East, Box 6, Lancaster, PA 17602-1150; (717) 293-7125.

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Eight stained-glass windows in the sanctuary of Community Church of the Brethren in Hutchinson, Kan., are the work of the "Cracked Glass Gals." Church member Anita Cooney trained three other women, Betty Sampson, Betty Robinson and Opal Frye, in the art of stained glass. The group met twice a week in the church basement; the sanctuary windows represent 100 hours' work. "We practiced two years before we cut our first glass or soldered our first joint on the sanctuary windows," says Sampson. A window in the chapel, "Jesus Feeding the Five Thousand," honors Cooney, now in a nursing home. (*Church of the Brethren Messenger*)

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Daniel Quimayousie, 71, a Hopi from Hotevilla, Ariz., was ordained to the ministry in the church he founded and has led for 26 years. He began his ministry in 1971, when he started the Hotevilla Gospel Church. "I wasn't raised in a Christian home," Quimayousie says, "but I attended [Bacavi Mennonite] church, and someone told me I should go to Bible school and learn more about the Word of God, to minister to my people." He was ordained earlier this year. "A couple came to me and wanted to get married and I said I couldn't do it because I was not ordained," he says. The church held a special ordination service on May 17, with Elmer Myron, pastor of Inter-Tribal Mennonite Fellowship, Phoenix, officiating. (*GCMC News Service*)

$800 a year for special projects such as this. In some cases workers, such as Derksen, choose to use two years' allowance in one year to help cover a larger project; then they have no project the second year.

Derksen's other partner churches are Douglas Mennonite in Winnipeg, Indian Valley Mennonite in Harleysville, Pa., and his home church of Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B.C.

After Derksen's presentation at Grace this summer, the congregation had a game of "Musical Chairs," in which members paid to play. That activity raised between $250 and $300.

Derksen, who returned to Japan Aug. 11, says he "received a warm hearing" for his appeal for funds for the chair project and has managed to raise his limit of $1,600. He also found "a good quality chair in a furniture shop in Richmond [B.C.], where the manager is willing to give us a good deal." He plans to confer with the Oita church members to decide whether or not to make the purchase.

Construction of the new church is scheduled to start in September and be finished by February 1998.

"We thought about having a Canadian crew come and do part or all of the labor volunteer," says Derksen. "Materials are cheaper here [in Canada]—but it would cost a lot to ship them. It would end up being as expensive."

The estimated cost of building a structure to serve as worship space and pastor's residence is 23 million yen, about $270,000 Cdn.

"The company who gave us the low bid is not a Christian company," says Derksen, "but it seemed to make a difference that they were doing the job for a church. I know someone who works for that company, and they are doing the job at cost." *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Peacemaker discusses prospects for Nothern Ireland

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—As parties in the ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland sit down for renewed peace talks, one of the founders of the first mediation center in Northern Ireland is "cautiously optimistic" about efforts to bring peace to the divided nation.

Joe Campbell

"Turning cease-fires into lasting peace in a deeply divided society is hard work. It takes a long time, especially when you have had almost 30 years of violence and a community—Catholic and Protestant—that is traumatized in deep fear," says Joe Campbell, assistant director of the Mediation Network of Northern Ireland, currently visiting and speaking in the United States. "I am cautiously optimistic that we are working in the right direction, but there probably will also be violence as we continue to move in the direction of an agreement."

Campbell was recently inducted into the prestigious Order of the British Empire for "services to the community in Northern Ireland." He works in Belfast to build bridges between Catholics and Protestants. He and his colleague Brendan McAllister negotiated a peaceful settlement to a summer 1995 conflict between Catholics and Protestants over a proposed Orange Order march through a Catholic neighborhood in Portadown, Northern Ireland.

> ***"What we're doing in terms of conflict transformation and mediation is not only appropriate in political disputes, but also appropriate in church and family struggles in North America."***
>
> ***Joe Campbell***

Today the focus for the 51-year-old father of three is increasingly on training others to develop grassroots efforts at mediation in communities throughout Northern Ireland. Last year, the Mediation Network trained nearly 600 people, almost half in a six-day conflict transformation workshop.

Despite his success, Campbell, a member of the ecumenical Corrymeela Community of Reconciliation, has experienced setbacks and acknowledges the role his faith plays in sustaining him through the dark times.

"Accept the good times and recognize they don't last forever, but neither do the down times last forever," he says. "In the sweep of life, God is in control. To have the ability to step back and recognize that is an important skill."

Although trained as an engineer, Campell worked for more than a decade among Catholic and Protestant youth in inner-city Belfast, where he recognized the need to do something more. "I had been asking questions on faith issues, particularly concerning violence and the church's response to violence," Campbell says.

In 1984, he met Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker Joe Liechty, who was studying the history of the Irish conflict and provided an introduction to the Mennonite way of nonviolence. Campbell took a sabbatical in 1987-88 to study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., returning with a renewed vision for his country.

"Irish people often don't welcome outsiders into their conflict. They're much more private," says Campbell, who with others has created an indigenous model of mediation. "In many ways, Irish people had been doing mediation without [giving it] the technical names North Americans have. It's often done within the family. ... We [at the Mediation Network] help people identify the skills that are needed and further develop [them]."

As joint program coordinator in Northern Ireland for MBM and Mennonite Central Committee since 1988, Campbell leads a group of Catholics and Protestants who advise Mennonites about their Christian peace witness in the country. "In a divided community, it would be very easy for outsiders to be triangled into one side," Campbell says. "Part of my role is to keep MCC and MBM strategically in the middle so we can be effective with both sides."

In his September visit to the United States, Campbell plans to give more than simply a report on his situation in Northern Ireland. "What I'm doing on this side of the Atlantic is, I believe, what God is calling me to do. All of us, no matter where we are, need to respond to [God's] call," he says. "What we're doing in terms of conflict transformation and mediation is not only appropriate in political disputes, but also appropriate in church and family struggles in North America." *Tom Price*

Opening a window

MCC Bolivia photo

Bolivians living in the Santa Cruz area recently had the chance to look through a window into the lives of the 30,000 Mennonite colonists who farm nearly 30 percent of Santa Cruz department's (province's) cultivated land and maintain a unique, separate way of life.

The Bolivian government and a local cultural organization organized four weeks of exhibitions for the general public, the first three dedicated to indigenous groups. The final one, July 21-25, spotlighted Mennonite and Japanese colonists.

Some 3,800 visitors came to the Mennonite exhibition. A number of Santa Cruz newspapers and television stations carried news about the event and about the colony Mennonites.

The exhibition included a Mennonite historical timeline, charts showing the impact the colonies have on agricultural production—for example, they cultivate 51 percent of the department's soybeans and produce the majority of cheese sold in Santa Cruz—photos from some of the colonies, quilts, homemade toys and books. *Emily Will*

The Mennonite Church of Butterfield, Minn., celebrated its 75th anniversary Aug. 3. The celebration included a potluck meal and historical presentation. The one remaining charter member, Erwin Linscheid, 96, still attends regularly. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's new chief executive, guaranteed at a major church gathering July 9 that Hong Kong's religious freedoms—for individuals and organizations—will not be tampered with, reports Ecumenical News International. Tung Chee-hwa gave the assurances as he welcomed the Lutheran World Federation to Hong Kong. He said that religious organizations can continue to run seminaries, schools, hospitals and welfare institutions. (*Gospel Herald*)

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At a recent seminar, "Are Pro Sports Bad for Black America?," held for the National Association of Black Journalists, sponsor Nike was pounded, according to *Editor & Publisher*. Nike was criticized for its marketing, which has led to kids killing or hurting others for their shoes. Former pro basketball player Craig Hodges blasted the company for selling high-priced shoes that are produced overseas "at slave wages." (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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China's policy of limiting families to one child resulted in widespread female infanticide and selective abortion, since many families believe it is better to have a boy. By the end of the decade, however, reports *Current Thoughts & Trends*, there could be a surplus of 70 million single men in China. An increased "value" in women has created a new $1.4 million trade: kidnapping and training women for marriage and prostitution. The problem is especially severe in rural areas. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

The Minn-Kota Country Auction and Sale, held July 25-26 in Sioux Falls, S.D., brought in over $81,000 for Mennonite Central Committee. Auction items included a 1954 Chrysler Windsor Deluxe car that sold for $3,000, and a dozen wooden eggs, each made from a different wood native to South Dakota, for $305. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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"Theohydrology" and "hydrotheology" were the topics of Richard Heggen's presentation at the eighth International Conference on Rainwater Catchment Systems in Tehran, Iran, in April. Heggen, a Mennonite and civil engineering professor at the University of New Mexico, was the only non-Islamic scholar to speak about how religious belief has addressed rainfall. Heggen says that Islamic scholars' central critique of Western thought is that religion is divorced from the rest of life. "To have a Western person [talk about the interplay of religion and science]," says Heggen, "struck a chord with them." (*Gospel Herald*)

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Last January, 5,400 churches across the United States raised more than $1 million on Super Bowl Sunday to fight hunger. It all started with a chance remark in January 1990 of pastor Brad Smith at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, S.C. He said, "As we enjoy the Super Bowl, let's be mindful of those who don't even have a bowl of soup to eat." The youth group decided to collect $1 from each church member watching the game. Youth groups at other local churches did the same; the money was sent to a soup kitchen. Each year since, more churches have gotten involved in the "Souper Bowl"; in 1993 the project went nationwide. Since 1990, $2.8 million has been raised for food banks, soup kitchens, Habitat for Humanity, and other mission work. For more information, call 1-800-358-SOUP. (*Salt of the Earth*)

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Send resume or inquiry to **Plains Mennonite Church, c/o Search Committee, 50 W. Orvilla Road, Hatfield, PA 19440-3643.**

Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa., is looking for an **assistant pastor.** The job description entails half-time involvement with youth leaders and youth of the congregation; the other half-time involves visitation, preaching and other pastoral tasks as defined by the Spiritual Council.

Please send resume to **Grace Mennonite Church, 630 York Avenue, Lansdale, PA 19446.**

Mennonite Mutual Aid is seeking a **fraternal adviser** for the Franconia and surrounding region to serve as a resource person and communication link with congregations, assisting them in accessing MMA services and programs. Qualified candidates will have the ability to motivate others; good communication, public speaking, organizational and management skills; an understanding of local church structures and a willingness to travel.

If interested, please fax letter of interest with resume to **Human Resources Department, fax (219) 533-5264,** or mail to **MMA, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.**

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Reviews

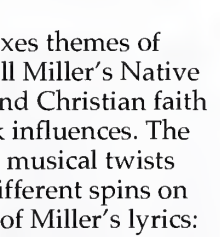
MUSIC

TWISTS AND TURNS

Raven in the Snow *by Bill Miller (Warner Bros., 1995, CD $15.98 U.S., cassette $10.98 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Larry Penner, Lancaster, Pa.

Raven in the Snow mixes themes of singer-songwriter Bill Miller's Native American heritage and Christian faith with a gamut of rock influences. The result is an album of musical twists and turns that put different spins on the constant themes of Miller's lyrics: hope for justice, harmony with nature and advocacy for the poor.



Miller grew up on the Stockbridge-Munsee Indian Reservation in central Wisconsin, where he learned the toll racism and poverty can take on a community. He told *Request* magazine how so much injustice led him to consider suicide in his teen years and how he later came to see "how much life is worth and how beautiful it is. I've got three kids, and what I can do, not only for my family but for the Indian people, is to value those things and bring them up higher, and to do that you've got to have some hope."

Hope permeates Miller's lyrics. Not always creatively inspired, his lyrics nonetheless hold a consistent honesty that make them convincing.

Miller's music, unlike his lyrics, is always taking a new turn, at times echoing Neil Young or Bob Dylan, at times Pearl Jam (who shared the stage with Miller at an Apache Indian benefit) or Tom Petty. The title cut throws in a taste of funk rock, and "Eagle Must Fly Free" even features an old-time acoustic blues arrangement.

Most musically adventurous on the album are three instrumental cuts excerpted from a 90-minute jam by Miller's band. As an experiment, Miller had his band improvise while watching Phillip Glass' film *Koyaanisqatsi*, a visual parable about the land and our culture's abuse of it. The tracks feature Miller playing the wooden flute. The first cut particularly evokes Native American sounds with an almost Andean flavor. (You may have heard Miller's flute before; he played on Vanessa Williams' performance of "Colors of the Wind" from the Disney film *Pocahontas*.)

Raven in the Snow represents a departure from the Native American sound of Miller's first album to a more individual voice. It's a voice worth hearing.

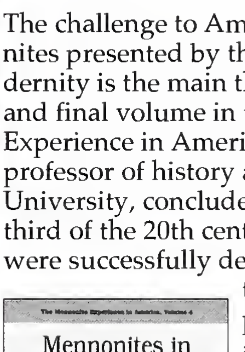
BOOKS

CHANGING CURRENTS

Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community *by Paul Toews (Herald Press, 1996, 441 pages, $19.95 U.S./$28.50 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Marlene Epp, Cambridge, Ont.

The challenge to American Mennonites presented by the forces of modernity is the main theme of the fourth and final volume in the Mennonite Experience in America series. Toews, professor of history at Fresno Pacific University, concludes that by the final third of the 20th century, Mennonites were successfully developing an identity "rooted in a particularistic past and a global present."



Given the prevalence of war during this era—World War II, Korea and Vietnam—the Mennonite response to outer and inner pressures regarding their traditional pacifism is also a central focus. As the peace movement gained momentum and popularity in secular society, reaching its height in the 1960s, Mennonites experienced an identity crisis and had to ask themselves what was distinctive about their peace position.

Toews' dominant approach is an analysis of changing ideological and theological currents within the Mennonite community. As a history of ideas, the book devotes substantial space to Bender's *The Anabaptist Vision*, to new understandings of nonresistance exemplified by Hershberger's *War, Peace and Nonresistance* and Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus*, and to the conflicts between fundamentalism and modernism as reflected in individuals and institutions.

Toews has analyzed most events and ideas from the perspective of the three largest groups—the General Conference, the Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Brethren. Those who were most successful at anti-modernism—the Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites—are dealt with primarily in one specific chapter.

Throughout the mid-20th century period that Toews examines, American Mennonites sought to find a balance between the traditions that seemed crucial to the maintenance of fundamental doctrines and practice and the trend toward acculturation that also offered the potential for renewal of the Mennonite church community. Thus they stressed nonresistance during war even while redefining their peace position to emphasize what Toews calls "servant activism"—they looked for new forms of separation even while, willingly, becoming more globally engaged, and they created modern institutions that reflected their involvement in American culture yet had the purpose of reinforcing distinctive Mennonite beliefs.

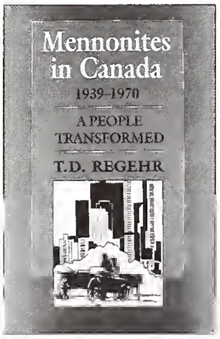
By the 1970s, most American Mennonites were no longer "die Stillen im Lande" (the quiet in the land). Instead they were speaking out, some against social injustice and war, and others in favor of evangelical renewal. Toews has done a fine job in documenting this dramatic change in Mennonite thought and behavior.

HOLISTIC HISTORY

Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: A People Transformed *by T. D. Regehr. (University of Toronto Press, 1996, 563 pages, $29.95 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Steve Nolt, South Bend, Ind.

This third volume in a Canadian Mennonite history series begun by the late Frank H. Epp traces the transformation of Canadian Mennonites during the three decades following the outbreak of World War II. The war widened the horizons of many rural Mennonites, Regehr contends, opening their communities and setting the stage for eventual economic and social integration into Canadian society. Canadian Mennonites were not fully assimilated into that society by the 1970s, but they were transformed in a way that made the world of 1939 seem very distant.



Although giving the bulk of his attention to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, the Mennonite Brethren and the (Old) Mennonites, Regehr includes the experiences of all Mennonite groups—from the Kleine Gemeinde to the Old Order Amish—as well as passing references to Brethren in Christ and Hutterites. The book includes a variety of helpful tables, charts and appendices. Some U.S. readers may even want to begin with the appendices, which briefly identify Canadian Mennonites by ethnic origin and migrational cohorts.

While scholarly in tone, the book is not difficult reading. In an autobiographical prologue, Regehr tells of his adolescent reaction to his Alberta Mennonite Brethren upbringing. Disturbed by what he perceived to be an evangelicalism that contained an implicit Sunday/Monday dichotomy, he later returned to the faith after discovering a "holistic" Anabaptist spirituality that made "no distinction between secular and sacred matters" and that held to "the lordship of Christ over all of life."

That recovery not only brought Regehr back into the Mennonite fold but also influenced his academic work, directing his pursuit of an equally holistic Mennonite history. His book is not a traditional "churchly" story of theologians, missionaries and doctrinal development (although that is all here to some degree). Rather, the central narrative focuses on modernizing farmers, enterprising businesspeople, urbanizing professionals and performing artists. When Regehr does trace theological shifts among his subjects, he does so in creative, indirect ways—such as in his survey of the nurture and training of youth during this period.

The anticipated integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church has raised questions about the relationship of Canadian and American church bodies. As these discussions continue, American Mennonites would do well to become more familiar with the historical experience of their Canadian brothers and sisters. This book would be a good place to begin.

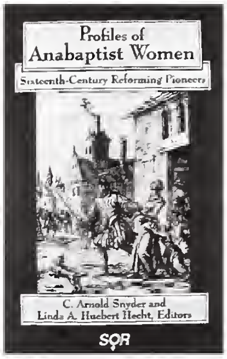
WOMEN'S WITNESS

Profiles of Anabaptist Women: 16th-Century Reforming Pioneers *edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996, 438 pages, $28.95 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Jeni Hiett Umble, Elkhart, Ind.

"Profiles" is an apt description of these biographical sketches of 16th-century Anabaptist women. One cannot see whole persons, only glimpses of our female forebears which can be gleaned from 16th-century martyrologies, court records, correspondence and testimonies. This volume profiles little-known Anabaptist women—women such as Helena von Freyberg of Münichau and Margret Hottinger of Zollikon. Helena was a wealthy noblewoman from the Tirol. Margret and many of the other women, however, came from humble circumstances. Indeed, historians would know little about most of these women except that their choice to be rebaptized resulted in documented arrests, often followed by banishment or martyrdom.

Following the theory of multiple origins of the Anabaptist movement, *Profiles* is divided geographically into sections depicting Swiss, South German/Austrian and North German/Dutch women. Excellent maps by Clifford Snyder depict the area covered by each section and introductory essays outline the context of Anabaptism in each region.


Profiles of Anabaptist Women
Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers
C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht, Editors
SQR

Within each section are essays revealing the lives, faith and witness of individuals. The women are known simply by their name and their town. Preceding each essay is a map pinpointing the story's location. A few articles examine groups of women in specific areas such as "Anabaptist Women Leaders in Augsburg" and "Anabap-

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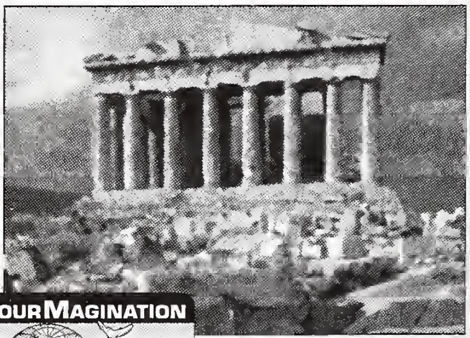

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tist Women in Tirol who Recanted."

The idea for *Profiles* grew out of a conference ("In a Mennonite Voice: Women Doing Theology") held in 1992 at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont. That conference and this text testify to historians' increased knowledge of early Anabaptist women.

In addition to the editors, 17 scholars contributed. This is not immediately apparent because contributors are listed at the back; authors' names are not given with their articles. Evidently this is consistent with the publication of other books in the series "Studies in Women and Religion"; however, it seems an unnecessary exercise in conformity.

Scholars will appreciate the careful documentation that accompanies each essay as well as a detailed appendix that reviews the status of research on women in the Reformation. The book is highly readable and should appeal to those with a general interest in their faith history. Indeed, *Profiles* is an essential addition to the library of anyone interested in the origins of Anabaptism and especially to those who value the contributions made by women.

CHRISTIANITY AS CULTURE

A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society, *by Rodney Clapp (InterVarsity Press, 1996, 251 pages, $14.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Arthur Boers, Waterloo, Ont.

Here is book worth plenty of study and re-reading. Rodney Clapp, former editor of *Christianity Today*, tackles the thorny issues of what it means to be a Christian in this post-Christian world. He criticizes mainline Christians who want to sponsor modernity (e.g., Bishop Spong) and conservative evangelicals who want to "recapture" society and culture (e.g., Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson).

Instead, Clapp argues for seeing Christianity as its own culture, one that engages and challenges the culture around. He sees a deadly confusion whenever we identify Christianity with culture.

Interestingly, Clapp is influenced by several Anabaptists and cites John Howard Yoder and Dale Brown. Also, unexpected in such a prominent evangelical leader, he is a staunch advocate of nonviolence. He particularly criticizes Christian approval for the Persian Gulf War.

Clapp is frank about the mistakes Christians have made in identifying with nation-states and he bashes Constantinianism in all its forms. He urges us to take seriously and even welcome the reality of pluralization. He even suggests that the so-called "culture wars" might be a gift to help us clarify our priorities.

He argues that all cultures have their own ways of doing primarily three things—eating, procreating and fighting—and on all three counts Christians are different. In this light, worship is especially important in developing our own culture. His chapters on worship are particularly good. According to Clapp, worship is to acclimatize us to the reign of God (not to the world.)

Clapp is calling for the formation of Christians in voluntary communities of faith. He shows that we need to work hard at a community mindset in this individualistic age. And he calls us to discerning engagement with our surrounding culture. Such discernment never ends but is complex, dynamic and ongoing. This book is challenging in its devastating critiques of our society and our churches. But it is also very hopeful. Clapp points the way out of our morass and gently prods us to begin with small steps where we already are—"incremental obedience."

Resources

- **Faith for the Journey: Youth Explore the Confession of Faith** by Ann Weber Becker (Faith & Life Press, 1997, $8.95 U.S./$12.25 Cdn. plus shipping) offers a youth perspective on the confession. It can be used as an interactive journal by an individual or as a group resource. To order, call Faith & Life Press at 1-800-743-2484; e-mail flp@gcmc.org.
- **Who Is God?** by Tracy Wenger Sadd helps youth get a handle on "who" God is. This is a five-session study guide for high-school youth in the Generation Why series. Available from Faith & Life Press, 1-800-743-2484; $12.95 U.S./17.75 Cdn.
- **Take Two Tablets: The Ten Commandments** by Frank Ramirez is a six-session study guide for high-school youth in the Generation Why series. Available from Faith & Life Press, 1-800-743-2484; $14.95 U.S./20.50 Cdn.
- **Claiming the Promise** is a seven-session adult Bible study curriculum on homosexuality, published by the Reconciling Congregational Program of the United Methodist Church in conjunction with the Supportive Congregations Network (SCN) of the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns and nine other ecumenical partners. Order from SCN, P.O. Box 6300, Minneapolis, MN 55406; (612) 722-6906; e-mail SCNetwork@aol.com. Study books are $5.95 U.S. each ($4.50 each for 10 or more); leader's guides $9.95 U.S. each; plus $3 shipping and handling.
- **Encounters: Early Images of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples** (General Store Publishing House, 1997, $18.95 Cdn.) is a sampling of photographs from the collection of the Geological Survey of Canada. To order call (613) 432-7697.
- **International Children's Bible Dictionary** by Lynn Waller (Word, 1997, $12.99 U.S./$18.99 Cdn.) gives definitions for more than 1,000 Bible terms and includes illustrations, concordance, word studies and more.
- **Universe Drama in Three Acts** by Rosemary Radford Ruether is a video for grade six and up on God's creation and the environment; includes study guide. Available for $17.95 U.S. postpaid from Maryknoll World Productions, P.O. Box 308, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0308.
- **Cleaning Up Biased Language: Toward Creating an Inclusive Society** is a pamphlet that addresses not only sexist language but racist and militaristic language. Available from Eighth Day Center for Justice, 205 W. Monroe, Chicago, IL 60606. Copies are $4 U.S. each, or $3 each for 10 or more.
- **Common Sense Christian Living** by Edith Schaeffer (Baker, 1997, $12.99 U.S.) deals with down-to-earth aspects of daily life and asserts that all of life is "spiritual life."

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Editorial

Paying the price

We tend to look at education as a commodity, something to obtain in order to better ourselves. But Jesus models a more holistic approach. We teach and learn in order to spread God's justice in our world.

Unlike many teachers in his day, "Jesus spoke with a prophetic voice to all people," writes Pheme Perkins in *Jesus As Teacher*. "Understanding his message did not require special education or even a life that had been marked by holiness in a special way."

Too often education is used to empower further those already in power and keep the powerless in their place. The idea of public education—to make education available to everyone—is a good one, but if you examine our educational system, you find inequities throughout.

Part of Jesus' style of teaching was to use parables. He used images from people's everyday lives, such as a sower sowing seeds (Mark 4), a woman looking for a lost coin (Luke 15) or people finding themselves in debt to a landlord (Matthew 18). His parables did not so much impart knowledge as force his listeners to grapple with situations around them from a different perspective.

The perspective that Jesus brought to his teaching was that the reign of God was at hand. God's reign, Jesus said, is one of justice, of healing, of compassion for all. Jesus preached an upside-down kingdom in which the poor are blessed, the hungry are filled with good things and the rich are sent away empty.

"Jesus' audience lived in a world that seemed to be dominated by evil and injustice," writes Perkins. It's similar today. And as Jesus did not ignore the injustice faced by his contemporaries, neither must we ignore the injustices in our world.

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire died last spring at age 76. Instead of the "banking" concept of education—teacher imparts facts, students receive them—he developed a "conscientizing" approach, which encouraged poor people to question the way things are and look for ways to bring change. Instead of teaching passive students, Freire presented real-life scenarios and asked students to struggle actively for solutions.

Dogma: We need that approach in our schools and in our churches. Following Jesus is less knowing dogma than imitating his way of love. If we want to learn we will first have to deal with whatever problems keep us from learning Jesus' way. And if we want to teach we will have to deal with the barriers that prevent our students from learning.

> *If we persist in denying justice to our children and denying them an adequate education, we will continue to reap the violent crime that we already see among adolescents.*

Our public schools are set up to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, yet many children come to school hungry or afraid to return to an abusive home. We expect schools to teach them to behave, when at home they witness violence and disrespect every day.

We want a society, a world, where people act civilly. Yet we don't want to invest the money and effort it takes to make our society's children safer and healthier. I shudder at how little priority we give to children's health and schooling.

When we paid the school fees for our daughter, who is entering fifth grade, Jeanne, my wife, said to the registrar, "That's not much." The registrar said, "You're the first person who's said that."

People complain about school fees or about the amount of our taxes that goes for education, though it is really quite small. Yet a couple will spend more in one evening for babysitting, eating out and seeing a movie than what we paid in school fees for one year.

Roman sages said, "What a society does to its children, its children will do to society." If we persist in denying justice to our children and denying them an adequate education, we will continue to reap the violent crime that we already see among adolescents.

As we teach and as we learn, let us pursue peace (Psalm 34:14) so that God's justice will come to all. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 18
SEPTEMBER 23, 1997

Inside

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A refuge for the voiceless

Prologue

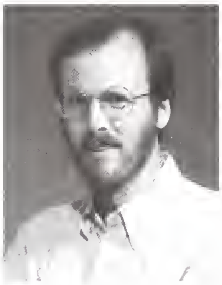
This issue shows some of the important work of Mennonite Voluntary Service workers. MVS is a program of both the General Conference Mennonite Church and of the Mennonite Church, under the auspices of the Commission on Home Ministries and Mennonite Board of Missions, respectively.

MBM writer Christy Risser has written four stories that focus on seven MVS workers and the struggles they have faced in trying to help immigrants in South Texas.

Another focus is the topic of refugees in the United States and how recent legislation has made it more difficult for people to come to this country and apply for residency and citizenship. This is a subject that should be close to the heart of many Mennonites who were immigrants themselves or who have relatives who were.

Elaine Shenk speaks out against recent U.S. immigration legislation (page 11). J.B. Miller lays out some dilemmas Christians—particularly those in urban areas—often face and asks what Jesus would do (page 12).

For our final issue in January 1998 we want to include responses from our readers. Send us a paragraph (100 words or less) describing an article or photo or artwork that you remember from your year(s) of reading *The Mennonite.* This may be a positive or a negative memory. Please be specific. Mail them to the address below by Nov. 30. We'll print what we can. *gh*



Next issue: Mennonite artists

Cover: Photo by Emily Will (MCC)

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General Conference Mennonite Church

A refuge for the voiceless

Mennonite Voluntary Service workers try to help immigrants in South Texas who face persecution from legislation that they consider immoral.

Results of 'an immoral law'

Christy Risser

Editor's note: *Christy Risser wrote the articles and took the photos that appear on pages 3-9.*

The woman is dressed all in black as if to hide herself in the darkness. But it is high noon here along the Rio Grande River, just west of the International Bridge in Brownsville, Texas.

From the Mexico side of the river, she looks nonchalantly, but cautiously, at the U.S. Border Patrol truck, parked just down the river, on the U.S. side. She makes her way down the steep embankment to the shore, always looking at the truck.

Something distracts the driver, and he throws up a cloud of dust with the truck's tires as he speeds in the opposite direction of the woman, chasing something she cannot see. She moves into the water.

Holding a bundle on her head, she hikes her shirt up to keep from getting it completely soaked in the cold river. Into the water, and across ... to the "land of opportunity." The man in the Border Patrol truck sees her and speeds to the bank of the river near where she is crossing.

He jumps out of the truck, draws his sidearm and walks down to attempt to catch the woman in black. But he does not find her. The officer eventually gives up and drives the truck back to

Woman in black: *A woman crosses the Rio Grande River into Brownsville, Texas*

"The immigrants and refugees I see every day as I process asylum applications are 'the least of these.' If we don't start treating them as we've been commanded in the Bible, then I hate to see what comes down on us in the end." **Stephen Obold**

his position farther down the river, to watch for others.

Emerging from her hiding place among tall weeds along the side of the river, the woman sees her chance to run and takes it. Clutching her small bag of possessions, she runs across the park to the bustling downtown area of Brownsville, where, if the border patrol is not waiting just over the rise, she can immediately blend into the populace of this border town.

When Mennonite Voluntary Service workers visit Brownsville, they always take a "site-seeing" trip to the park where the above scene was observed. This daily event leaves an indelible impression on the MVS workers who witness it.

Volunteers in Harlingen travel several times a week to "El Corralon," the popular name for the immigration prison near there. Farther north, in San Antonio and Dallas, volunteers work to process immigrants and refugees who have applied for legal residence in the United States.

With the implementation of the new immigration reform law by the U.S. Congress this year, nearly everyone in North America has heard something on the news about immigration. Yet few live with the realities of immigration and the new law every day.

Legal and illegal: The Commission on Home Ministries and Mennonite Board of Missions jointly administer the Mennonite Voluntary Service program, which includes six MVS units in Texas. Of the 22 volunteers in that state, more than half work directly or indirectly in immigration and refugee-related positions. Volunteers in other positions every day face the realities of the tremendous influx of immigrants and refugees, legal and illegal, into that state.

Everything the volunteers do is affected directly by the legislation brought about by legislators, most of whom have never visited the border area. "[The legislators] don't care about anything having to do with immigrants and refugees, unless it can get them re-elected," says volunteer Rachel Hostetler of Harlingen.

The most recent legislation, passed last fall, is the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. Many of the provisions of the act went into effect April 1. While that date is associated with bad jokes, immigration lawyers say this is not one of them.

"The new bill, generally speaking, has little regard for 'due process,'" says Kelly Carson, an immigration lawyer who coordinates ProBAR, one of the organizations with which MVS workers serve. "It is full of provisions stripping judicial review [from the immigration process]."

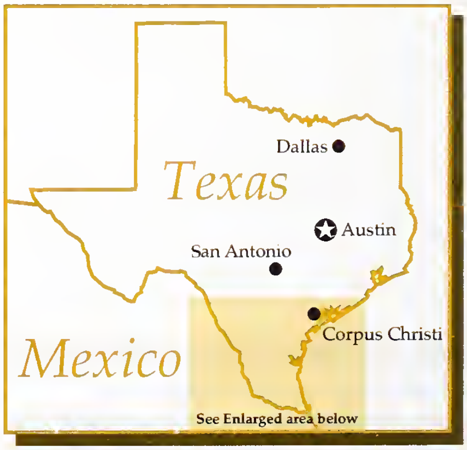
Due process is one of the guarantees made to U.S. citizens and historically has been extended to people from other countries attempting to enter this country under political asylum.

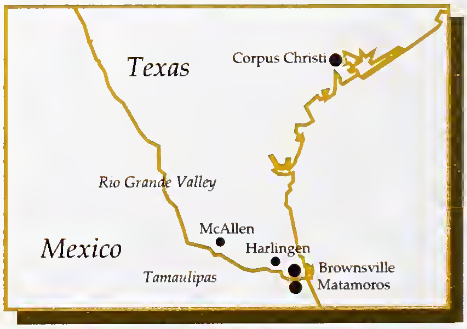
For Kelly, however, the greater problems with the new law are not so much legal as they are moral.

Disposable: "To me it is an immoral law," she says. "It treats people as if they are disposable instead of as human beings with dignity. And it pretends in the most hypocritical way that we are not responsible for the forces that cause people to migrate to this country when, of course, the actions [the United States] takes affect people all over the world. It is immoral, for example, to turn our backs on Central Americans after sponsoring the wars in their countries for [many years]. I would think that as a peace church Mennonites could understand that whether they are [politically] conservative or not. War has consequences."

Stephen Obold, from Hesston, Kan., and serving with Proyecto Adelante (Project Onward) in Dallas, was initially shocked by the refugees he interviewed.

"The first interview I had was with a woman [from Central America] who had been raped and beaten. I was shocked. Now I expect that. I'm a little numb to it, and that bothers me," he says. "If we're not doing anything to help [refugees and immigrants] eke out a better existence, the message we're giving them is the exact opposite of what our church believes: Help your neighbor. The immigrants and





refugees I see every day as I process asylum applications are 'the least of these.' If we don't start treating them as we've been commanded in the Bible, then I hate to see what comes down on us in the end."

According to Kelly, the roots of the new immigration law are more than 100 years old.

During the 1848 California gold rush, immigrants flooded into the United States in hopes of getting rich quickly. A great many came from China. At the time, China, still ruled by an emperor, had good relations with the United States. But by 1889, a case before the Supreme Court was to decide on the legality of closing the borders to Chinese immigrants. Justice Field ruled that it is within the powers of the Congress to exclude aliens from the United States, and it "is an incident of sovereignty, which cannot be surrendered."

The reasons for immigrants' entry to the United States today vary. Those who flee their country of origin come because of cultural, economic or political persecution or hardship.

Casandra Byler, an MVSer working at ProBAR as a paralegal, says that racist and nationalist decisions are the norm of immigration law enforcement; the focus on immigrants is because the United States "needs an enemy."

"Communism isn't a threat," she says, "so the politicians have made everyone believe immigrants are the enemy. Having an enemy is good for politics and for the economy. It's not true, but as long as people believe it is, this political scam will continue."

Christy Risser is a staff writer for Mennonite Board of Missions.

Service to 'the damned'

Mennonite Voluntary Service workers see their paralegal work with refugees as an expression of their faith.

Christy Risser

While visiting a 19-year-old Guatemalan being detained by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service at a federal prison, Rachel Hostetler, Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) worker in Harlingen, Texas, asked how INS officials had treated him when he was arrested.

Quietly, and with his eyes frequently darting toward the door to see if any INS officials were nearby, he told Rachel he had been grabbed by the hair, shirt and neck, then questioned. He said he requested an attorney, but the officials told him he had no right to an attorney. As he refused to answer their questions, one of the officials reportedly said, "Te vamos a chingar" ("We're going to mess you up"), and the officials allegedly beat the refugee.

For Rachel and the other four MVS workers who served as paralegals in the state of Texas, this story is no longer surprising.

"Not all of them are bad," Rachel says. "Some of the INS and Border Patrol officers are decent human beings. But there are some bad ones, too, and I believe that what that Guatemalan boy was saying is true."

A native of Archbold, Ohio, Rachel volunteered with Proyecto Libertad (Project Liberty). Proyecto, as it is called, screened refugees and immigrants who had been caught by INS officials and imprisoned in the Port

***"Some of the INS and Border Patrol officers are decent human beings. But there are some bad ones, too."* Rachel Hostetler**

***"Mike [Schmidt]'s compassion and willingness to listen closely to the stories of the people who come in here is a gift," says* Ninfa Ochoa-Krueger, *executive director of* BARCA (Border Assistance *for* Refugees and Colonia Advocacy).**

Isabel Service Processing Center, which non-INS personnel call "El Corralon."

The Spanish title is less sanitized than the INS title for the facility. "The Spanish word 'corralon' would be something like 'cattle stall' in English," says Casandra Byler, an MVS volunteer working for ProBAR in Harlingen. "It implies a crowded, dirty, completely inhumane setting, which is what the detention center is. It strips refugees of their humanity by issuing them a colored jumpsuit and a number."

Stephen Obold, a volunteer working in Dallas with Proyecto Adelante (Project Onward), does not have to deal with the realities of a detention center, but his work has familiarized him with the issues surrounding the U.S.-Mexico border zone.

"What it comes down to is that we're screwing people over," he says. "[Until I started in this] I didn't realize how many things we take for granted because we're citizens."

Ninfa Ochoa-Krueger, executive director of BARCA (Border Assistance for Refugees and Colonia Advocacy) in McAllen, says that her work is an expression of her faith.

"It is not following our Christian ethic to label [refugees] or deny them a legal process," she says. "If I am a Christian, I must follow what I believe, and I believe that treating refugees like trash is wrong."

Mike Schmidt, a volunteer from Goessel, Kan., worked as a paralegal for BARCA. Ninfa says that volunteers like Mike, who have a passion for justice, are what make BARCA and the other legal-aid organizations in the border zone work.

"Mike's compassion and willingness to listen closely to the stories of the people who come in here is a gift," she says. "He does his best to help, but unfortunately all of our hands are tied sometimes because of the law."

Legal aid: In San Antonio, MVS workers have served in various roles at the Refugee Aid Project. David Moyer, Akron, Pa., served there until Aug. 30. RAP originally was founded as a social service and legal aid organization for refugees and immigrants in San Antonio. But with the changes in the immigration laws, RAP quickly focused almost exclusively on legal aid.

"I came here because I was interested in learning about the whole immigration process," David says. "I majored in computer systems, but computer programming didn't excite me too much. So I came here to explore a direction I was interested in."

The MVS workers serving in these positions in Texas echo one sentiment without exception. In one way or another, they agree that as Christians, and more specifically as Mennonites, the church has a responsibility to care for the refugees and immigrants they meet face-to-face every day.

"[Mennonites in the north] may not have ever met an immigrant or a refugee," Casandra says, "but that's no excuse for not caring. These people are human beings whose lives depend on us to help them. And we can't help them when things like the new immigration law get passed."

Christy Risser is staff writer for Mennonite Board of Missions.

***"I majored in computer systems, but computer programming didn't excite me too much. So I came here to explore a direction I was interested in."* David Moyer**

Care for 'the least of these'

Mennonite Voluntary Service workers provide health care and advocacy for refugees.

Christy Risser

The needs of immigrants and refugees in the United States are not limited to legal assistance. One-third of the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) workers in Texas are involved in education and health-care assignments that directly serve the immigrant and refugee populations.

Deena Graybill, a volunteer from Freeport, Ill., is a registered nurse serving at the Brownsville Community Health Center. This federally funded clinic serves many legal refugees and immigrants who are extremely poor.

Contrary to the stereotype, most of Deena's patients are not out to take advantage of the system that must treat them even if they cannot pay for the services rendered.

"Sure, there are some who take advantage of the system," she says, "but I think you'll get that anywhere. I think we get less of that here because of the Latino pride."

That pride, Deena says, often leads to very sick people not coming in for care because they know they don't have the $15 to pay for their visit.

"When I ask very sick patients why they didn't come earlier, they often tell me they were ashamed to come for treatment when they couldn't pay," she says. "I tell them that they won't be turned away, but that's not the point for them. They don't want a free ride and are insulted that I would offer them one."

More than an hour's drive from Brownsville, Joy Braun of Shaumburg, Ill., works with Project Arise in her MVS assignment in McAllen. Braun serves as a teacher for teachers. The teachers she trains go out into the large "colonias" (neighborhoods) surrounding the Project Arise building and teach children and housewives to read, write and become U.S. citizens.

"This program is a part of the community," Joy says. "The students contribute to the program by working for [Project Arise]. The biggest work is with the children, but working with the whole family is important, too."

Joy says that Project Arise works to help Latinos function in English so that the children can succeed in English-only public schools and the adults can get by in stores where Spanish is not spoken.

Based in Harlingen, the Rio Grande Border Witness Program educates Northerners about the unjust life of many Latinos who live immediately on either side of the U.S.-Mexico border. Nate Selzer, of Hesston, Kan., worked for Border Witness as a translator as he helps guide groups who have come down.

Nate once led a group from a

***"When I ask very sick patients why they didn't come earlier, they often tell me they were ashamed to come for treatment when they couldn't pay."* Deena Graybill**

"If we, as the* United States*, want to sponsor death squads and arrange for wars in other countries to prove that we're strong, then we need to accept the consequences of our actions and take care of the refugees that are created." **Nate Selzer (at right)**

Lutheran church in Nebraska. The group made arrangements with Border Witness, and drove down to Harlingen.

From there, Nate translated as the group was led to the "maquiladoras" (foreign-owned—typically U.S.—factories just across the Mexican border that are notorious for their safety and environmental violations, as well as harsh working conditions and low pay), El Corralon (the federal immigration prison near Harlingen) and La Posada (literally "the inn").

The group of 12 listened to tales of terror from men and women who had been granted political asylum in the United States after fleeing persecution in their country of origin.

"We didn't leave our countries for economic reasons or for luxury," says a Salvadoran man, who with his wife had escaped the death squads there in the late '80s. "We left because the political situation threatened our lives."

Most of the residents in the short-term home for people recently granted U.S. legal status come from either El Salvador or Guatemala, where the U.S. government, through the Central Intelligence Agency, sponsored decades of war and death squads that left the remaining population impoverished and terrified.

A recent refugee to the United States, now living at La Posada, escaped Guatemala after the peace accords were signed.

"Since the accords were signed, I have seen people shot, people hacked to death with machetes and children used as target practice by the death squads," he says.

Nate says the current treatment of people coming to this country must change. "It is insane the way people are treated when they come here," he says. "They've traveled, often on foot, hundreds and thousands of miles. They have been robbed and beaten. The women are often raped by the 'coyotes' (smugglers). Then they get here, and they're sent back, because someone in our government has convinced people we're being invaded by immigrants. We are the reason they're coming here in the first place, so I think it's our responsibility to follow through. If we, as the United States, want to sponsor death squads and arrange for wars in other countries to prove that we're strong, then we need to accept the consequences of our actions and take care of the refugees that are created."

Christy Risser is staff writer for Mennonite Board of Missions.

Many Mennonites were immigrants; now they can help be a voice for other immigrants.

Mennonites can be a voice

Christy Risser

Living in the community of Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) and in the border state of Texas has had measurable impact on the lives of volunteers living there.

"The church needs to know what's going on down here," says Casandra Byler of Slatington, Pa., working in Harlingen. "It needs to know and to get involved, or what's to stop the injustices from moving north?"

To Stephen Obold, MVSer in Dallas, Mennonites should be more involved with immigration rights issues by virtue of their history.

"Many Mennonites were immigrants," he says. "Often they were rich. They've done well in North America. But I don't see them doing much at all to help other immigrants. Open your eyes and pay attention to what's going on with demographics. It matters. Mennonites can be a voice for relief to help immediately. We need to be helping refugees and immigrants rebuild their lives. We must help them rebuild their dignity as humans.

"If we claim to follow the example of Christ, then there is no other way, because the refugees and the immigrants are 'the least of these,' too."

Rachel Hostetler, who works with Proyecto Libertad in Harlingen, has

***"The INS has so much unchecked power, and as long as everyone, including the church, remains silent, the Juans of this world will continue to be returned to their country of persecution, where they'll probably be killed."* Casandra Byler**

participated in immigrant and refugee rights rallies and marches in Austin and Washington. For her, standing with her Latino brothers and sisters is more than just a part of her job, it's a part of her faith.

"If I believe anything I've ever been taught in church, then I have to do this," she says. "I have to stand with those who have no voice just because their skin is brown. They aren't allowed to speak, but I am, so I am giving them my voice for whatever that's worth to them."

Casandra carries with her a current asylum case that is not yet resolved. For her, it is the perfect example of what is not supposed to happen in the immigration system but does because no one speaks up.

Juan is a Honduran who escaped to the United States. During the 1980s, his uncle was a member of the notorious Battalion 316, the Honduran death squad that is reportedly responsible for 184 forced political "disappearances" (a euphemism for killing) during the decade of the '80s. With the end of the death squads in Honduras, family members of people killed by them have tried to find out about their fate. Many have been threatened, beaten or killed for doing so.

Juan's uncle was killed for trying to leave the Battalion when he decided the death squad was doing wrong. For seeking information on his uncle, Juan's life had been threatened, so he fled to the United States.

The immigration judge before whom he was initially brought says that Juan's case was the strongest he had seen in 37 years of working in immigration law. Juan's bond was set at $1,000, and a hearing on the merits of his asylum case was set for another date.

Before the final hearing, however, Juan's case was transferred to a different judge. The new judge did not find Juan's claim to be "credible" because of a technicality, says Casandra. Juan's asylum was denied.

Casandra and the other workers at ProBAR wanted to get Juan out of the detention center on bond as quickly as possible, so she headed out with $1,000 in hand from a special bond fund that ProBAR keeps for emergencies like this. By the time Casandra got there, she was informed that the Immigration and Naturalization Service attorney had increased Juan's bond to $10,000. (In the INS system, INS attorneys have the power to set bond over the ruling of a judge.)

"Juan doesn't have $10,000, and neither does ProBAR," Casandra says. "So he'll have to sit [in the detention prison] the whole way through his appeal, which could be a year.

"The whole idea of checks and balances doesn't exist here. The INS has so much unchecked power, and as long as everyone, including the church, remains silent, the Juans of this world will continue to be returned to their country of persecution, where they'll probably be killed."

Immigration and Naturalization Service officials in Washington declined to be interviewed.

The General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church respond to the needs of refugees and immigrants through the work of MVS workers. Some Mennonite congregations have been involved in isolated attempts at helping refugees. While they do not yet have an agency-wide position statement on immigration, Mennonite Central Committee is aware of the new law and is learning about its ramifications upon North Americans and immigrants alike. According to MCC's Washington Office, there is an increasing call from Mennonite churches to do more to speak out about the treatment of immigrants and refugees in the United States.

Nate Selzer, a volunteer from Hesston, Kan., serving in Harlingen, says that the responsibility for the new immigration law and the ways refugees and immigrants are treated by the INS is upon all U.S. citizens.

"If no one stands up for what's right, the INS will continue to be allowed to abuse refugees and immigrants," he says. "The choice is up to [each of us]."

Christy Risser is staff writer for Mennonite Board of Missions.

Editor's note: *Juan's real name has been changed to protect him. His case remains in process. His situation, however, is neither unusual nor unique. Casandra says that what has happened to Juan is "standard procedure" in El Corralon.*

A refuge for the voiceless

Letters

APPARENT CONTRADICTION

I wonder if anyone else was struck by the apparent contradiction between two ideas in the July 22 issue of *The Mennonite*. The lead article on inclusive language makes the point very strongly that our choice of language has a great influence on how we think and act. But then the editorial on the back page reports with apparent approval a comment made in Winnipeg that quoted Shakespeare to the effect that the name we choose is not important, it is our attitude and how we live out the name that is important.

Are we to understand that even though we choose a name for our new denomination, one branch among many others on the Anabaptist-Mennonite tree, even though we choose a name that implies that we see ourselves not as a branch among other branches but as the trunk, as the main stem of the tree, are we to understand that this language choice will not influence our attitudes and the way we live as a new denomination? Are we also to understand that our choice of name will have no influence on how we and the other branches on that Anabaptist-Mennonite tree interact and relate to each other?

It might be helpful if those responsible for choosing the name would explain this clearly. While the name we choose for a rose may not change the rose, it is less obvious that the name we choose for our branch of the Mennonite family will not affect our relations with the other branches of that same family. *Robert L. Ramseyer, Bluffton, Ohio*

CAVALIER ATTITUDE

I am disappointed by the seemingly cavalier attitude of the assistant editor regarding the homosexual issue (Aug. 12 issue, page 24), for the Scriptures written in different contexts do not consider it "just stupid." It may well be that the young person [described in the editorial] was simply expressing her immaturity and her compromise with the surrounding secular society. Though mentioned seldom in Scripture, [homosexuality] is consistently mentioned as an abomination, and it will prove to have far greater and deeper implications than that youth recognized. For the church to be indifferent toward it is for the church to manifest major evidence of its acculturation and abandonment of Scripture as our guide and standard. I thoroughly agree that we shall "let no one despise our youth," but this does not mean that the church adopts an adolescent view. We are all called to become mature in Christ. *Gerald C. Studer, Lansdale, Pa.*

GREAT COVERAGE

Thank you for the great coverage of the youth convention in the Aug. 12 issue. I found the article by Melanie Zuercher (page 8) to be well done and accurate. Your reflections were also appropriate. *Abe Bergen, Winnipeg*

WHERE ARE YOUNG ADULTS?

Where all the "young adult" Mennonites? Look at the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns. Look at the Supportive Congregations Network. Those two organizations are primarily made up of several hundred young adult Mennonites (and Brethren). The General Conference and the Mennonite Church have weeded us out, resulting in us creating our own strong and well-organized "church." And we are not all gay or lesbian, by any means.

Most of us have lost patience with churches who stopped including us when they found out we preferred to spend our lives with someone of the same sex (or believed those who were gay or lesbian had every right to participate in the church). Once the two conferences have merged there will be a split between those who interpret the Bible literally and those who do not. It is happening already. Don't act so surprised. *Wilma Harder, Goshen, Ind.*

FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Umtata, South Africa—By chance we worshiped one Sunday with the small band of Christians known as the Congregational Catholic Apostolic Church of Zion in Transkei. Theirs is the first Zionist service we attended upon our arrival in 1986, and our ties have strengthened over the years—especially since the death of Mama Nombinja's husband, the group's bishop. As an illiterate peasant woman, reliant upon what income her garden provides, she has ministered valiantly to the needs of her small parish.

Bishop Motobele was there when we arrived, and we chatted over a cup of tea. Later Rev. Moti came. Gary and I had decided I would preach, but with three male leaders at the head table, I wondered.

The service in their small round church hall began with singing, dancing and praying. The Ten Commandments were read, interspersed with our singing and a chant, and then we sang the Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed.

When time for the sermon came, Bishop Motobele handed over to Gary, who handed over to me. I had selected the story of the widow whose children were about to be taken by the creditor as slaves to pay the family's debt (2 Kings 4:1-7). With many of the parishioners trying, often singly, against great odds, to provide for their families, it seemed appropriate. I focused on Elisha's words to the distraught mother: "What do you have in your house?" It was something she already had that God would use to meet her need; she had only to act. In Xhosa fashion, the three who spoke after me picked up on the theme and developed its message.

Many of those present came forward to kneel in the center for the prayers that followed, while the others sang and danced around them to the beat of the drum. Two hours after our opening song, we had our closing song and the benediction, the handshaking and hand washing. Then Mama led us back to her house, where I sat on her sofa as she bustled around.

At last she came bringing a small plastic bag holding six eggs, which she pressed into my hands. "Thank you for coming today. It helped." *Jean Isaac*

Speaking out

U.S. immigration law is unfair

Immigrants from poorer countries receive different treatment from others.

Elaine Shenk

In September 1996, the U.S. Congress passed immigration legislation that means sweeping change for immigrants. For example, the thousands of people in the process of obtaining legal status through a family member (legal resident or U.S. citizen) must now wait from one to 11 years to get their green cards. Three years ago Congress began allowing these immigrants to legalize status here in the United States instead of returning to their home countries. They still needed to wait the prescribed amount of time and pay a fine for having entered without permission, but they were then given their green cards in the United States.

The paradox of the 1996 law suggests, however, that immigrants may be penalized with even more waiting time for remaining with their families while waiting for their final interview with the Immigration and National Service (INS). Many are faced with the difficult decision of leaving their families for years, or staying here and facing the possibility of not being able to get their green card.

Immigration policy is not "neutral" but is biased toward people from other first-world countries and against those from countries such as Mexico. The United States does not require more European tourists, for example, to obtain a visa to come here, yet many Europeans overstay their visit, thus joining the ranks of the "undocumented." However, they are not treated in the same way as someone from Mexico who is required to get a visa but does not have the resources to do so, and who crosses the border without it. The irony is that this latter prototype of undocumented person is generally more in need of a job here, while those from wealthy countries often have opportunities at home.

Green card: One of the main priorities at the Albuquerque (N.M.) Border City Project is working with battered immigrant women who are married to U.S. citizens and legal residents but who do not have legal status themselves. Because they are undocumented, their husbands often threaten them with arrest and deportation if they call the police about violence. Due to a relatively recent law that allows these women to get a green card on their own by documenting the abuse, we have seen a number of them get work permits and start the process toward legal residency. These clients are in a vulnerable position because without legal status they are unable to get a job to support themselves and their children, so they are forced to remain with the abuser.

One client, Victoria (not her real name), experienced years of physical and mental abuse from her U.S. citizen husband. Her husband had continually promised to change after his violent outbursts, and at one point had even joined a church and asked to be baptized, but that same day he admitted it was solely to convince her to stay. Victoria finally decided to leave for the sake of herself and her daughter and went to live with some family members. She is working on documentation to be submitted with her application for a green card.

> ***I don't know the circumstances under which my ancestors came here, but I am fairly certain that they didn't bring a visa with them.***

Unfortunately, this story is common among our clients. Our office assists them in writing a "declaration" of all that has happened, which seems to serve not only to document the abuse for INS but also to enable them to work through their own story and to move beyond the debilitating circumstances in which they have lived. It is encouraging to see women like Victoria gain confidence through this process.

I find the anti-immigrant sentiment (toward both documented and undocumented) in the United States to be disturbing. I am perplexed by the fact that often the richest nations are the most inhospitable to foreigners, while people with tremendous needs of their own welcome strangers into their homes and towns.

In 1990, I spent a few days at a Salvadoran refugee camp in Honduras. Although the Honduran military did not want the refugees to be there, other Hondurans did offer help. The Salvadoran family I stayed with were generous hosts, giving me a large portion of chicken for my meal from one of the few chickens they owned.

I do not comprehend the situations people are leaving behind when they cross the border, at least not when they are leaving for economic or political reasons. How can I judge the person who crosses the Mexican-U.S. border to provide for his or her family, when I do not face their dilemma?

I don't know the circumstances under which my ancestors came here, but I am fairly certain that they didn't bring a visa with them. I choose to welcome the stranger, knowing not only that somewhere along the line someone welcomed my ancestors but that that thread runs through the stories of the Israelite wanderers, and the directives God gave them regarding their own treatment of foreigners: "When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself: For you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Elaine Shenk is a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer in Albuquerque, N.M., serving with Albuquerque Border City Project, which offers advocacy and legal assistance to immigrants.

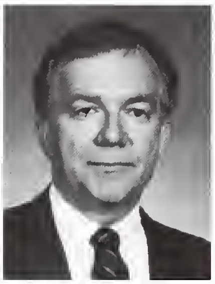
"Speaking out" and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite.*

Fiscal health

What would Jesus do?

Every day we are faced with challenges to reach out and help someone.

J.B. Miller



J.B. Miller is financial services product manager for AMA Solutions, Inc., in Chicago.

Recently a minister in his Sunday sermon encouraged me to be Christlike. "As followers of Christ we are to model Christ in our everyday life," he said.

I am sure I had heard that challenge before, but on this particular Sunday his words stuck with me longer than usual. As a Christian facing the 21st century, what does it mean for me to be like Christ? Every day as I go to and from work I face that question and wonder how Christ would respond to the following:

1. The man lying on the sidewalk on my walk home from the subway station: He appeared to be sleeping, but I couldn't be sure. He may have been dead. Since he was lying across the sidewalk I had to either step over him or cross the street before I could continue on my way home. By the way he looked, he wasn't a businessman who had just had a heart attack. He looked as though he hadn't bathed in days, and it had been months since he had shaved or had a haircut. Would Christ have stopped to find out if he was ill or if he needed a warm meal, or would Christ have crossed the street to avoid him? After all, there are so many social programs that meet the needs of the homeless.

2. The woman who began digging through the trash can in the park next to where I was having lunch: At first I thought she was looking for aluminum cans to recycle. Then I noticed her eating food from the bags that had been discarded—French fries mixed with cigarette butts, and any other food scraps she could find. She seemed to be too well dressed to be homeless. Maybe she suffered from a mental illness and really had plenty of resources to live on. Would Christ offer her what was left of his lunch, or would he continue enjoying his hamburger and fries from McDonald's? After all, there are many soup kitchens in the city where people like that can go for a hot lunch if they really are hungry.

3. The double amputee who sits outside the office building, shaking his paper cup and muttering, "Spare a little change?": Hardly anyone gives him any money, but every day he sits there, rain or shine. Would Christ occasionally drop money in the beggar's cup, or would he avoid looking the beggar's way as he takes money from the ATM machine? After all, the amputee is certainly eligible for Social Security benefits and doesn't have to beg to put food on the table.

RNS

Does Christlike stewardship mean listening to all the admonitions not to give to people living on the street?

4. The teenage boys who are always selling M&Ms outside the post office for their "athletic team": Regardless of the weather they are there, talking to anyone who will listen. Would Christ buy an occasional pack of M&Ms, even though he may not like them, or would he avoid their gaze and hope they leave him alone? After all, they're probably not really with an athletic team.

What does it mean to be like Christ in our everyday encounters? Each day we are faced with challenges to reach out and help someone. Whether it's confronting a beggar, or having someone ask us for a donation to a worthy charity, people are always asking us for assistance. So what does it mean to be like Christ when it comes to our resources?

Does Christlike stewardship mean listening to all the admonitions not to give to people begging and living on the street? We are often warned, "Don't give money to beggars, it only encourages them to keep begging, and they become a real nuisance, which in time will drive tourists away." Are we to obey these directives? Or does being like Christ mean taking risks and helping people who have great need, even though help may only sustain their destructive behavior?

Or what about people in our local community who never seem to be able to manage their money? They seem to always need financial help. They can't pay their health insurance, they fall behind on their house payments, their car gets repossessed. Do we need to "teach these people a lesson," since they haven't changed their ways, or do we continue to reach out to them in loving ways, hoping that maybe this time they will learn from their past mistakes and correct their ways?

How do we decide whom to help? I wish I had some answers.

Will
peace
find
a way?

Read about MCC's work with others seeking to bring peace to the West Bank—in the next issue of *a Common Place.*

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Mail the attached card to MCC and begin receiving FREE the other four issues of *a Common Place*.

a Common Place

WHERE WE MEET
IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

SEPTEMBER 1997

Good gifts

Choosing where you shop is important. So is choosing how you give.

Mennonite
Central
Committee

Generous acts of giving

by Deborah Fast

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17).

What is a "perfect gift"? With the holiday season just around the corner, many of us may become preoccupied with this question as brightly-colored advertisements and catchy radio jingles promise their products will deliver happiness to our loved ones.

Articles in this issue of *a Common Place* move our thoughts in the direction of the first part of James' admonition in his letter to brothers and sisters in Christ—to "every generous act of giving." James' emphasis is on the *act* of giving, which is itself significant, and reflects the character of the giver.

Ten Thousand Villages, an income-generation program of MCC, promotes "fairly-traded" gifts—crafts purchased directly from artisans in poor countries for a fair price, and sold in North America. You can make a difference in the lives of people in poor countries, says Paul Myers, Ten Thousand Villages director. To read more about fair trade, see "It matters where you shop" (page 5).

Choosing where you shop is important. So is choosing to whom you will give.

"We should think about other people, not just about getting more things for ourselves," says Pennsylvania grandmother Ruth Charles. A desire to teach this to her 20 grandchildren, and to encourage "generous acts of giving," prompted Charles to look for alternative gift ideas last Christmas. The family chose to give blankets to MCC, for distribution to refugees in camps in eastern Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The story of these blankets, and of the family who received them, is one of hope coming out of suffering and despair (story on page 12).

Giving to others also motivates thousands of volunteers throughout North America who operate used clothing—or "thrift"—stores to raise money for MCC. These shops donate millions of dollars annually, while at the same time promoting a less consumptive lifestyle, and offering friendship to their customers. "We've got a good thing going," says Irene Steiner, coordinator of 13 MCC thrift shops in Ontario. Yet Steiner remains keenly aware of the competition, mostly from large for-profit thrift stores coming on the scene. "Now, more than ever, we have to communicate our mission," she says (see story page 14).

Also in this issue see a profile of MCC's involvement in Lesotho. For some 24 years MCC workers and Basotho hosts and co-workers have together sought solutions to the problems of conflict and poverty in this tiny mountain kingdom surrounded by South Africa. ■

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***a Common Place* invites readers to meet the people Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers have come to know, and to search for the strength and hope we share as children of God. *a Common Place* promises readers an honest look at life on the edge of survival, trustworthy information about the events of our world and practical ways of working together to make a difference.**
***a Common Place* is published by MCC, a relief, service and community development agency that strives for peace, justice and the dignity of all people by sharing its experiences, resources and faith in Jesus Christ. Our point of view is shaped by the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ faith tradition and some 900 workers serving in 50 countries in food production, health, education, job creation, refugee assistance and conciliation. MCC is sponsored by the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America.**

a Common Place

September 1997 Insert

features

5 It matters where you shop

You can make a difference in the lives of people in poor countries, says Paul Myers, director of Ten Thousand Villages. Buying fairly-traded products is one way to support organizations providing fair wages and acceptable working conditions. By Deborah Fast and Emily Will.

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Profile: Lesotho

For 24 years MCC workers with their Basotho hosts and co-workers have sought solutions to the problems of conflict and poverty in this tiny mountain kingdom. Photos by Mark Beach. Stories by Mark Beach and Arli Klassen.

12 A miracle of sharing

Refugees in Central Africa face both unbearable sorrow and relentless hope. For someone who has lost everything a new, warm blanket is a "treasure beyond measure," says MCC worker Krista Rigalo. By Pearl Sensenig.

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On the cover: **Medea Ulysse, a master craftsman in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti, earns vital cash income by selling his traditional metal work through MCC's Ten Thousand Villages. MCC photo by Howard Zehr.**

a Common Place **Editor-in-chief is Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker. Editor is Deborah Fast. Production manager is Kiersten Hoffman. Designers are Michael Eby-Good and Julie Kauffman.**

Direct inquiries to Editor, *a Common Place*. See mail, e-mail and phone information on page 2.

Consumerism, not population, is the problem

I appreciated Dwight McFadden's article, "Servant leaders needed for meeting human needs," in MCC's 1996 Annual Report (in March 1997 a Common Place*). However, the priorities for addressing human needs he cited, as identified by 35 Christian relief and development agencies, had one glaring omission.*

The article includes two references to population growth as a problem, but nowhere does it mention consumerism. The expansion of our consumer society is consuming every bit as many natural resources as population growth.

Since the onset of colonialism the trend has been to devote more and more of the world's resources to the global consumer economy, while less of the Two-Thirds World's resources are devoted to the production of basic grains.

Over-population will indeed be legislated against because the poor do not have political power. But as members of the "consumer society," we should know that the first priority of "those who seek to give of themselves on behalf of the hungry and minister to the needs of the oppressed" should be to decrease the amount of resources we use.

Eugenio Hess
San Jose Guayabal, El Salvador

Find peace in sharing pain

Recently a 15-year-old boy I had worked with at the mental health department in my community shot himself in the head. I have found myself grieving over this tragic loss and reflecting on the often broken bonds that hold us to earth. In this boy's dying I have felt the pain of so many who have lost someone who fell in on themselves. Suicide, more than any other tragedy, seems to injure something deep within all of us.

Kathy Ogle shared out of her experience and moved something in my soul ("Walking with Grief," May 1997). The suffering of just being alive knows no boundaries, no class distinctions, no political orientations. The worst suffering of self-destruction paradoxically binds us together. This pain tells me that I am truly a brother of all people of the world. Only in sharing this pain and not running from each other will we find peace.

Please thank Kathy for her blessing. I will share it with friends.

Richard L. Kreutz
Fresno, Calif.

Must ask who has the power

After reading and re-reading Lynette Meck's article ("We must keep getting bolder," July 1997) I felt the need to respond. I look at the headline and wonder what the other half would be; we must keep getting bolder—to do what? Why? In terms of? Questions without answers.

This is the state I have been in for the last nine months since I encountered reverse racism. I am German, a single woman, a pastor in a Mennonite Brethren church, a seminary graduate going on for doctoral studies. In short, I am a minority. I was in a serious relationship with an African-American man. He is educated, employed, intelligent, deeply spiritual and refuses to live his life as a color. That is a noble cause, but very hard to live out in a dominantly white state such as California.

I as a minority woman dated a minority man and, as a couple, we were an offensive sight—with friends, in church and in society. Because we chose to love each other we had to explain ourselves—because of the difference of our skin color.

MCC's perception is right that racism has to be dismantled, and I found myself saying "yes" while reading the article. It is an important step to be inclusive in recruiting and hiring staff. But that can never let us off the hook in asking two important questions: why are we doing it, and who holds the power? Does MCC work on racial reconciliation because it feels guilty, because it is losing its constituency—or because it is called to do so by Christ? MCC should work on dismantling racism because there is "no longer male or female, Greek or Jew, black or white."

The question of who holds power must be addressed as well. Historically the one who holds power must give it up to reconcile with the (perceived) minority, as we saw happen with Martin Luther King, with Gandhi, with apartheid. I am very proud of MCC that it is giving up power for the sake of reconciliation, but it should never be done because of guilt or pressure, but because we are called by Christ to be reconcilers.

Sylvia Klauser
Fresno, Calif.

Imperialist-capitalist Jesus does not save

I must briefly respond to Abe Enns' letter in the May issue of a Common Place.

I don't understand how Mr. Enns can be "uneasy" about MCC's emphasis on justice. Jesus was all about justice. God is justice. I think Mr. Enns' idea about justice, as it relates to aboriginal people, is somewhat uninformed. He must understand that land is more than just property to aboriginal people. The land is a way of life; it is an integral part of aboriginal spirituality.

Mr. Enns further states that "the real need of Native people is the salvation Christ offers." I agree—Christ does save. The Western imperialist-capitalist Jesus does not, however. Jesus is very much alive in aboriginal spirituality, and it is this spirituality that can make a major contribution to our understandings of God.

John Loewen
Winnipeg, Man.

Artisans in the village of Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti, sculpt intricate designs from discarded oil drums. MCC photo by Howard Zehr.

It matters where you shop

by Deborah Fast
and Emily Will

"You have a choice: exploitation or empowerment," declares a headline in the Summer 1997 issue of *Co-op America*. It matters where you shop—and we do have a choice, the article tells North American consumers. An increasing number of "fair trade" organizations—including MCC's Ten Thousand Villages—are offering that alternative.

Ten Thousand Villages (formerly SELFHELP Crafts of the World), an MCC income generation program, helps provide jobs for otherwise unemployed or underemployed artisans in poor countries. They do this by purchasing handicrafts and other items at an agreed-upon fair price and selling them in North America.

Why fair trade?

Fair trade may seem like an issue that does not affect you personally, says Paul Myers, Ten Thousand Villages director, but in fact it does. Every time you buy a product from a manufacturer exploiting its workers, you are encouraging that manufacturer to keep doing so, he says. When you buy a product from an organization that values its workers, you are encouraging that organization to continue enabling its workers to provide for their families.

Essentially, fair trade means a purchaser pays arti-

(continued next page)

When you buy from fair trade organizations you help to:

- ensure that producers are paid a living wage
- provide safe and healthy working conditions
- support community development in housing, health, education and appropriate technology
- encourage environmentally sound business practices
- preserve cultural diversity by supporting traditional talents

You know it's fair trade if . . .

unfair trade "If it weren't good for them, people wouldn't do it (e.g. work for low wages in terrible conditions)."	**fair trade** "If it's not good for them, we want it to change (e.g. work to intentionally raise wages and improve conditions)."
unfair trade "Let someone else pay to protect the earth."	**fair trade** "Let everything we do help protect the earth."
unfair trade "We'll leave tomorrow if we get a better offer somewhere else."	**fair trade** "We're committed to this relationship, and will build a solid business together."
"The consumer is sovereign. Suppliers serve consumers' tastes."	**fair trade** "Consumers decide their dollars will serve producers' needs."

(continued from previous page)

sans a fair price for their product. In an ideal situation, the artisans are paid what their time is worth and for the materials they invest in a product. Goods are purchased as directly as possible from the producer, and assistance is offered for product development, funding and training opportunities (see sidebar, "You know it's fair trade if...").

You can make a difference in the lives of artisans and other producers, says Myers. Find out who is making what you are buying and the conditions under which it was produced. Admittedly this search can be complicated. While some companies are starting to include such information in their labelling, the practice is not widespread.

Ten Thousand Villages is a member of the International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT), and annually signs its "code of practice" calling for commitments such as concern for the well-being of artisans, respect for artisans' cultural identity and environmentally conscious management of resources.

But it costs more!

Products made using processes that exploit workers and destroy the earth are cheaper than products made using processes that treat people fairly and protect the earth. Trading fairly is not without costs. Ten Thousand Villages staff, for example, need to travel to far-flung locations to meet with artisans. These people are often vulnerable to natural elements, which means communication can be unreliable. And frequently artisans are people on the edge of society; staff must balance needs and skills of artisans with a North American market demanding high quality.

Who is trading fairly?

Too often North American traders import from companies that exploit and even endanger their employees. But under pressure from consumers, some North American companies are slowly trying to change conditions for workers in poor countries. The Gap and Levi-Strauss, for example, have been striving to follow standards set by fair trade advocates. Levi-Strauss is working toward eliminating suppliers in countries such as China and Burma where human rights are repeatedly violated. While some have adopted "codes of conduct" dictating they buy only from suppliers who ensure acceptable working conditions for their workers, these are difficult to monitor.

Coffee is one example of a familiar product now available through a fair trade organization. In the past several years, thanks to companies like Equal Exchange from whom Ten Thousand Villages buys coffee, it has become possible to not only drink coffee guilt free but to even savor it—knowing the purchase is actually helping small coffee producers.

Small coffee farmers are often vulnerable to exploitative "middlemen" who prey on them for big profit. Equal Exchange is dedicated to purchasing coffee from farms they know operate fairly—that are run as cooperatives, for example, with individual members making decisions about the business that supports them. Begun in 1986, Equal Exchange bypasses intermediaries, which allows them to pay farmers—in countries such as Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico—higher prices for the their coffee beans, sometimes as much as twice the market price.

Equal Exchange garners just 0.2 to 0.3 percent of the $2 billion U.S. specialty coffee market. Canada's fair-trade coffee sales parallel those of the United States. But Rink Dickinson, an Equal Exchange founder and sales director, is hardly discouraged. He sees an emerging awareness of trade issues among U.S. and Canadian consumers and openness to supporting fair trade movements. He believes this support has come about in the past five years as North Americans have had to grapple with NAFTA and other trade issues affecting them directly. ■

Most stores affiliated with Ten Thousand Villages sell Equal Exchange coffee. Also, plans are to open a coffee shop in Boston, with Equal Exchange, this fall. For more information contact Larry Guengerich by phone: (717) 859-8100; or e-mail <lrg@mcc.org>.

Learning to live in

"The Place of the Hawk"

by Mark Beach

Outside of Jud Shearer's mud and thatched-roof house a bright yellow Cape Weaver danced on the clothesline. Shearer watched as the bird finished its routine with a song and then took flight.

"The greatest is watching the hawks," Shearer said, pointing to the ridge above his house where hawks float effortlessly, dipping and climbing with the air currents. "This village is called, Phakoeng, 'The Place of the Hawk,'" Shearer said.

On the slope behind his house, far below the soaring hawks, herd boys lead cattle from one hillside to another in search of pasture.

It's a long way from Shearer's home in the mountains of Virginia to the mountains of Phakoeng, Lesotho. For Shearer, the leap between the two was no more pronounced than on the day he arrived in Phakoeng in November 1995.

"They [MCC country representatives] dropped me off, literally," Shearer said of the beginning of his three-year term as a teacher. After unloading Shearer's belongings, they gave a hasty farewell, returned to their truck and left.

Shearer was alone, surrounded by strangers and furniture that wasn't his, and standing in front of an empty earthen house made of stone, mud and dung.

"I didn't know any Sesotho [the local language]," Shearer said. "I was trying to smile, but inside I was scared."

In retrospect, however, he understands that the moment he arrived with the other MCC workers was not a time for long good-byes. In fact, it was a beginning.

Shearer's host, landlord and soon to be friend was a widow, Mamolefe Sepiriti. Her plot of land included four small buildings, a garden and a small corral for her son's animals. Shearer's house was the only square building; the other three were round huts—a kitchen, sleeping quarters and a small church.

Jud Shearer with Mamolefe Sepiriti. MCC photo by Mark Beach.

Shearer spent his first weeks in language training with a local teacher. But still, "most of my days were filled with a lot of nothing," he said. "I had left all of my friends and family at home. I have never felt the days go by so slowly."

Eventually Shearer established a routine—getting him into sync with the village. Each morning he rises with the sun, waking a few minutes before 6 a.m. He washes, has a breakfast of toast and fruit, and by 7 a.m. is starting his walk to the school where he teaches.

If the river is low enough the journey takes only 30 minutes. If he has to cross the river by the bridge the walk is nearly twice as long.

After a full day of teaching Shearer is home by 5 p.m., and with darkness coming an hour or so later he spends time visiting Mamolefe, reads by candle light, writes in his journal and goes to bed.

Shearer's classroom setting has some similarities to North America, but for the most part it is radically different. The most startling difference is that students have so few resources. "With only a chalkboard to write on, I have to be creative," he says. "At first I wondered why students didn't just buy books—but now I understand they can't afford them," says Shearer.

One of Shearer's most difficult struggles is observing the corporal punishment used by teachers in his school. It's not unusual for students to be whipped when they disobey and most, in fact, expect it, says Shearer.

Woven throughout his journal and in letters to friends, Shearer has found himself asking why he came to Lesotho, and what it was that he wanted to do. He realizes his contribution may be small—helping students fight the odds and go on to high school, or refusing to use corporal punishment.

Perhaps most important to Shearer has been coming to feel at home in this community.

"I also realize I have been talking to God a lot since I am here," he said. "My faith has changed—it feels much more alive," he said. ■

Jud Shearer went to Lesotho in November 1995.

Mark Beach is a writer and photographer in Lancaster, Pa. He visited Lesotho in January 1997.

LESOTHO

Since 1973, 79 workers have served with MCC in Lesotho—in both rural and urban areas. Workers have assisted with agriculture, education and health, and later became involved with ecumenical peace and justice work. Throughout, MCC has emphasized a "ministry of presence"; workers seek to understand the complexity of communities in which they live, and to encourage local leaders. (For a more complete history of MCC work in Lesotho, see page 10.)

PROFILE:

Population:
1.9 million

Land size:
11,720 square miles
30,350 square kms

Languages:
English, Sesotho

Terrain:
high veld, plateaus,
mountains
altitude ranging from
5,000 to 11,000 feet

Literacy:
71%

Neighbors:
completely surrounded
by South Africa

Pausing on the journey—a Basotho woman in Leriba Province, Lesotho. MCC photo by Mark Beach.

Alene Coverdale worked in Lesotho from 1992 to 1995. Here she sits holding Mpho, and beside friend, Dineo. MCC photo by Scott Coverdale.

"May God **transform** all of us"

by Arli Klassen

A big feast, with barbecued meat, lots of food and about 100 Basotho (natives of Lesotho). This celebration—under a tent on the MCC yard in Maseru, Lesotho, in 1993—commemorated 20 years of MCC service in this southern African country. MCC began work in Lesotho in 1973; a summary of MCC's involvements over the last 24 years provides a picture of how MCC program changes over time, shaped by evolving ideas about the causes of poverty.

The 1970s—declared the second "Development Decade" by the United Nations—was a time of widespread belief that North Americans just needed to pass on the right kind of information, and poor countries would quickly "catch up."

During this time MCC program grew exponentially in Africa. Work in Lesotho included vocational training, high school education and health work. North Americans sought to share technical and academic expertise, and thus enable Africans to "develop themselves." MCC workers continued agriculture, education, health and social services programs over the next decade.

After some time it became clear that passing on information was not making enough of a difference. Those who earned diplomas and degrees still found few jobs available, and poverty remained entrenched. MCC workers began to emphasize community development—encouraging entire communities to work together to improve their quality of life. They identified problems in the area of local leadership and ownership (as opposed to foreign leadership), rather than as lack of information or skills.

MCC's emphasis on encouraging local leadership strengthened over time, becoming known as "presence ministry" during the 1980s. MCC workers in rural communities sought to be people-oriented rather than task-oriented, spending their time trying to understand the complexity of a community, and encouraging its leaders.

Politics also shaped program

Regional politics have always played a key role in shaping MCC's program in Lesotho. Completely surrounded by and economically dependent on South Africa, Lesotho struggles for political and psychological independence.

In the 1980s, as MCC continued supporting conscientious objectors and anti-apartheid activists in South Africa, Lesotho became a center of peace and justice activities, rooted in church-based institutions. This became a shaping force for MCC in Lesotho as well.

Throughout the changes in MCC workers' activities in Lesotho, common themes emerge. Service and ministry are always rooted "In the name of Christ." Peace and reconciliation have been MCC foci since it entered this country torn by racial, religious and political divisions.

Lesotho is a tiny country (about the size of Maryland/smaller than Nova Scotia), and MCC has had a quiet presence there over the last 24 years. However, both Basotho and MCC workers affirm that the impact of this presence has been significant. May God continue to transform all of us as we work together for the peace, justice, and dignity of all. ■

Arli Klassen is assistant director for MCC's Africa program, and a former country representative in Lesotho.

Peace at the polling booths

At times it is difficult to see the results of low-key, "presence" ministry, MCC's model in Lesotho, says Jim Shenk, co-director of Africa programs. But an MCC worker's presence can become a catalyst for positive change.

In months leading up to a 1993 national election in Lesotho, an event which many feared would lead to violence, an MCC worker played a significant role in encouraging peace at the polling booths. As a member of the Christian Council of Lesotho, this worker spent many "hallway discussions" encouraging church leaders to consider their role in the upcoming polls. The Christian Council of Lesotho then organized and trained 200 local election monitors, mostly clergy and church representatives.

After Lesotho's first election in 23 years was declared "free and fair," one bishop thanked MCC for its encouragement. Without it the churches may not have gotten involved, he said. The monitors were said to be a significant reason for the violence-free election that began Lesotho's transition from military rule to more democratic government.

◀◀◀ Pull-out section

Threads of unity among Sudanese women

"We had no reason to come together before this." In fact, the women who made this comment to MCC worker Mary Haarsager would have tried to avoid each other if at all possible. They are part of three Sudanese tribal groups living in a northern Kenya refugee camp, exiled from their country after fleeing some 20 years of civil war.

But three sewing machines donated by MCC to three women's groups in the camp were the vehicle for bringing them together for prayer and sharing common experiences. On a visit to the camp, Haarsager met with 15 of the women. Daily devotions stressed the need to work together in the body of Christ.

The women now plan to meet once a month for prayer, rotating locations between their meeting places. They also set up a committee to handle income from the machines and for buying needed spare parts; a Dinka woman chairs the group, a Murle woman is secretary and a Nuer Deaconess in treasurer. "My prayer," says Mary, "is that the threads of unity sewn here will become a beautiful patchwork quilt, for Jesus' sake."

Sheep—in sheep's clothing!

"He's a unique customer!" says Elsie Hamm of Murray McDonald, the sheep farmer who frequents the MCC thrift shop she manages in Portage la Prairie, Man. A regular customer at the "MCC Gift & Thrift," McDonald comes with a particular mission during each spring's lambing season—he's looking for large men's wool sweaters. He then detaches the sleeves, and cuts four small holes in each sleeve. These sleeves then become "sweaters" to keep his newborn lambs warm during cool spring weather.

"I got the idea from a sheep farming magazine," says McDonald, although he doesn't know of any other farmers protecting their new lambs this way. McDonald's lambs wear their borrowed wool for the first 10 days of their lives, after which they "have a real growth spurt," and no longer need them. McDonald uses about 20 sweaters each season—and he washes and re-uses them up to six times!

MCC Resources

***Carving a future in Kenya,* a seven-minute MCC video, tells the story of Boniface Muasya, a wood carver. Muasya is a member of Kenya Crafts Cooperative Union (KCCU), from whom Ten Thousand Villages buys carvings to sell in North America.**

***Thrift shops: No end in sight,* an 18-minute MCC video, gives a quick, in-depth look at how MCC thrift shops work, who the customers are and how you can get involved. These shops raise millions of dollars each year to help people in need around the world (see story on page 14).**

For a free loan of these videos, contact your nearest MCC office (see page 15). Also available for purchase: *Carving a future* $25 Cdn./$20 U.S.; *Thrift Shops* $30 Cdn./$25 U.S.

Supplement your church or school materials with resources from MCC. Look for a complete listing of more than 400 audiovisuals, photo exhibits and printed materials about the mission of MCC in the 1997-1998 MCC Resource Catalog. Includes a children's section. For a free copy, contact your nearest MCC office (see page 15).

Honeymoon with MCC

Sunny beaches. Elegant dining. A quiet retreat after the bustle of wedding preparations. These are what most soon-to-be-married couples look for in planning a honeymoon. It was a different story for Wes and Joan Brenneman, married June 28 in West Lafayette, Ind. Wes, a nursing student at Montana State University, and Joan, most recently a graduate student in statistical science, spent the first days of their married life pounding nails and climbing ladders in southeastern Kentucky.

"We wanted to make our honeymoon meaningful, rather than just camping or staying in a resort," say Brennemans. Hosted by MCC's SWAP (Sharing with Appalachian People) program, Wes and Joan reconstructed a porch for Glori-Faye Hall, a local resident.

"This is a small way to set the tone for our future life together," Brennemans point out, citing their interest in possibly serving in Appalachia with MCC. And the honeymoon suite? A "private room" located next to the SWAP office! ■

A miracle of sharing

by Pearl Sensenig (with reports by Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya)

TV commercials bombard children (and their families) with the message: buy! buy! buy! At Christmas the pressure intensifies. Last Christmas, as she had in years past, Ruth Charles puzzled over how to show her 20 grandchildren the true meaning of Christmas. "I wanted to teach the children by example that we should think about other people, not just about getting more things for ourselves."

As summer faded into fall, "I was thinking about and praying for a meaningful way to celebrate Christmas," says Ruth Charles, who lives near Lancaster, Pa. At about the same time, civil war began in eastern Zaire. (Zaire is now called the Democratic Republic of Congo.)

> *"I wanted to teach the children that we should think about other people, not just about getting more things for ourselves."*

Ruth Charles heard how people were abandoning refugee camps and their homes, fleeing with a few essentials—perhaps only a cooking pot and a change of clothing—and that MCC was gathering blankets to send. She developed a plan: the family would exchange a few simple gifts but would devote most of their money to buying blankets for war victims in the Congo. "I talked with the family and everyone agreed we would make this our Christmas project," says Ruth Charles.

After Christmas lunch the children wrapped themselves in the nine blankets the family had purchased. They sat by the fireplace in their grandparent's cozy home and tried to imagine what it would be like to be a refugee, stumbling through chilly mountains, fearing for your life.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles away in the Congo, Pastor Nsanze, his wife, Ruth, and their four children were on the move. The family had lived in an MCC-supported Rwandan refugee camp. When soldiers came to the camp, Pastor Nsanze and his oldest son were at church. They returned to find soldiers slaughtering men, women and children. Pastor Nsanze watched helplessly. He wanted to go in to save his family, but a bystander said, "God has saved you and this child. If you go down there, you'll be killed too. And this child will then be an orphan, alone in the world."

Believing the rest of the family to be dead, Pastor Nsanze and his son hid in a goat stable for three months as soldiers scoured the countryside looking for refugees. Finally they made their way to Bukavu where Pastor Nsanze shared his story and wept with MCC workers Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya. Pastor Nsanze and

In Congo the reunited Nsanze family receives a blanket and looks at a photo of the Charles family who gave it. For the Nsanzes and many others, the blankets provided warmth for the body—and for the spirit. MCC photo by Hershey Leaman.

Last Christmas in Pennsylvania the Charles grandchildren wrapped themselves in the blankets they were donating for Congo's war victims and prayed that "people will feel the love we have for them." MCC photo by Mark Beach.

Fidele had previously worked together on peace programs in the Rwandan refugee camps.

By then some 33,000 MCC blankets had begun arriving from North America. Krista and Fidele were making arrangements for distribution when they heard a rumor that Pastor Nsanze's wife, Ruth, had been spotted. Soon they discovered Ruth Nsanze was indeed alive and in the hospital. She had just given birth to a son she named Ajabu, which means amazing.

Ruth Nsanze told how she and the other two children had survived. Five-months pregnant, she had placed the youngest child in a basket on her head. She tied the other child to her back and with other refugees trudged some 500 kilometers/300 miles through the forest trying to keep ahead of the army. They hid for months with almost no food.

One day Ruth Nsanze heard a vehicle approach. She wearily decided to risk exposing herself, hoping the vehicle belonged to an aid agency, not to soldiers. Other fearful refugees encouraged her to leave Bahati, her 4-year-old, with them. As it turned out the vehicle belonged to the United Nations. But the refugees caring for Bahati had already disappeared into the forest. The Nsanze family began to rebuild their lives together again. But where was Bahati? Another month passed. Then word came that a 4-year-old boy was staying alone at a refugee transit camp in Rwanda. It was Bahati. The day before Krista and Fidele visited the Nsanze family to give them a blanket, Bahati was returned to his family. One of the Charles' family's blankets was given to the Nsanze family.

"One relatively small corner of the world—lives of unbearable sorrow and relentless hope. The miracle of sharing can be seen in something as simple as a blanket, which becomes a gesture of solidarity in a world of division and conflict," wrote Krista in a report to MCC headquarters. "For someone who has lost all in a war, the gift of a new, warm blanket is a treasure beyond measure."

And for the Charles grandchildren, the blanket project proved a lesson in the true spirit of Christmas. ■

Pearl Sensenig is an MCC writer and editor.

Comfort 'n Joy

FOR REFUGEES IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The joy of Christmas giving is denied to many Bosnian and Serb refugees still unable to return home after years of war. Your bundle of comfort makes gift-giving possible for these people who have so little.

We need your help. Choose the sizes you wish to include in this gift. Wrap all items in the blanket and protect with a bag. Please attach a check, payable to MCC, for $6 Cdn./$5 U.S. to cover shipping costs.

comforter or blanket • deodorant stick • hairbrush and comb • hard candy • bath towel • toothpaste
pair of mittens or gloves (adult or children) • 4 toothbrushes • 4 bars of bath soap • package of disposable razors
Christmas card with (optional) flat ornament/photo • a (new) small stuffed animal

Please deliver by October 27. For information about drop-off points, contact your nearest MCC office (see page 15).

“Little guys” do a lot for MCC

by Deborah Fast

Volunteers at the New Hamburg, Ont., store. To find out more about MCC thrift stores and how you can become involved, ask for MCC’s new video, *Thrift shops: No end in sight.* For more information see page 11. Photo courtesy of Irene Steiner.

“Our stores are the ‘little guys,’” says Irene Steiner, describing 13 Ontario thrift stores selling used clothing and household items to raise money for MCC. When compared with large for-profit thrift stores coming on the scene, MCC Ontario shops may be “little.” But with more than 800 volunteers and donations of some $700,000 Cdn./$510,000 U.S. to MCC in 1996, they are hardly insignificant.

Yet Steiner, who oversees the shops from MCC’s Kitchener, Ont., office, remains keenly aware of the competition. “Now, more than ever, we have to communicate our mission,” she says.

What is that mission? “We are here for the poor,” Steiner asserts, “but also for anyone who wants to live a socially conscious lifestyle and doesn’t feel the need to wear new clothes all the time.”

More than this, shop volunteers feel their work is a ministry. We share our faith with customers, says Steiner.

Volunteers also offer practical assistance. New Hamburg’s shop, for example, responded to the government’s cuts to social assistance by offering a shopping evening specifically for single mothers, including discounts and refreshments.

How did Steiner become involved with thrift stores? “Growing up in Markham, Ont., I was always taught to re-use things; it was a way of life,” she says. In October of 1981 she and her sister, with strong community support, started the Care and Share Shoppe in Stouffville, Ont. Selling used clothing and also crafts from Ten Thousand Villages, “the store developed beyond our fondest dreams,” says Steiner, and it keeps growing today.

“We have a good thing going,” says Steiner of Ontario shops, “but we need to involve younger people—as volunteers and as shoppers.” The average age of managers and staff—nearly all of whom are volunteers—is 65. A new shop opening in Waterloo specifically aims to be inter-generational; “twenty-somethings” will participate on the board and operate the store.

What inspires all this time and energy spent for thrift stores? People volunteer for lots of reasons, says Steiner. Our volunteers support MCC’s work overseas, and they also care about the needy person—often their customer—closer to home. ■

Opportunity to give

Material resources

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER: BATH TOWELS

You can help MCC replenish its supply of bath towels for shipment to schools, orphanages, clinics and hospitals overseas. Stocks have diminished after this year’s shipments to Nicaragua, Russia, Ukraine and the West Bank. Because of their versatility, towels are a frequently requested item.

To find out more, contact your nearest MCC office (see page 15).

Half a world away, insights hit home

by Delphine Martin

Julianne Wolfe, right, with Ibu Meiske. Photo courtesy of Julianne Wolfe.

Julianne Wolfe clearly remembers her first day as an assistant in Ibu Meiske's kindergarten class in Pati, Indonesia. Her fair skin, light hair and near six-foot height had struck a menacing tone by the kindergartners' standards, causing most of the children to cry.

Ibu Meiske introduced Juli as her friend, discussed her features, then pointed out many ways that Juli is just like Indonesians.

"What do you think Juli eats? Rice or gas?" she asked.

The children chorused, "Rice."

"How do you think Juli comes to school? Riding a bicycle or flying like a bird?"

Ibu Meiske was helping her students learn that despite physical diversity, people share more similarities than differences. Though intended for the children, the insight hit home for Juli as well.

Half a world away from her home in Courtenay, B.C., Juli worked with the local Christian church through SALT (Serving and Learning Together), a one-year MCC program for young adults. During her year abroad she lived with two different families, first in Semarang where she taught conversational English in a Christian high school, then in Pati, where she again taught English and assisted Ibu Meiske. Both places provided opportunities to learn how building friendships can bridge race, religious and economic differences.

"In Semarang I realized that I was prejudiced in my attitudes to rich and poor, or Muslim and Christian," Juli says. "I would see them first as rich or as Muslims, but God would say, 'No, love them as people.'"

Insights that Juli learned in Semarang were added to by Ibu Meiske. "She was a very loving, godly woman," Juli says of her. "In Indonesia the class system is still very strong, but she treated everyone with respect and taught me that everyone deserves a 'good morning.'"

These insights helped give perspective to Juli's year in Indonesia. "I can go into the world and help a lot," Juli says. "But there are a lot of things I can't do. I learned that the best thing I could give is my life, my friendship and my time. By doing that, I realized that people are more than their circumstances make them."

It's a valuable insight. For kindergartners and adults alike. ■

Delphine Martin is a freelance writer in Lancaster, Pa.

Placement options: Young adult programs

MCC offers a wide variety of service options for young adults, ranging from one week to one year. Volunteers live and work in locations throughout North America and overseas. Assist with home repair in rural Kentucky. Plant a garden in a Canadian Native community. Live and work with a European Mennonite family for a year. Teach English in China.

For more information about these and other MCC assignments, contact your nearest MCC office (see list this page).

Where is your nearest MCC office?

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

MCC Central States
106 West 24th Street
PO Box 235
North Newton, Kansas 67117
(316) 283-2720

MCC East Coast
21 South 12th Street
PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-3889

MCC Great Lakes
13363 Jericho Road, Box 82
Kidron, OH 44636
(330) 857-7721

West Coast MCC
1010 G Street
Reedley, CA 93654
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Mennonite Central Committee Canada
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News

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Vigil puts MVS veterans in national spotlight

Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC/MBM)—Two Mennonite Voluntary Service veterans gained national media attention through their participation in an Aug. 25 prayer vigil at the U.S.-Mexico border in Brownsville, Texas.

Nathan Selzer and Kristin Borntrager were photographed by a *Brownsville Herald* photojournalist during a prayer vigil marking the start of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) "Operation Rio Grande." The photo was subsequently distributed to newspapers nationally via the Associated Press wire service.

The prayer vigil was the final part of a day-long demonstration by opponents of the new INS project designed to deter illegal immigration into the United States from Mexico. Operation Rio Grande places between 60 and 270 new officers along what are considered crucial points of illegal immigration.

For example, the Brownsville, Texas, station of the INS is slated to have a total of 250 agents in six months, making it the largest border patrol station in the state.

Selzer, who completed his MVS term in late July and now has found a job in the area, said that the effectiveness of the new program is "questionable."

"Immigration has just shifted farther west along the border," he says. "It's throwing money at a problem, but they're really just making the problem worse. The INS and all of us here in the United States need to address the root causes of why people are coming, because we won't stop them from coming."

Experts in the field of illegal immigration cite political, cultural and economic oppression as some of the primary reasons for the perceived flood of illegal immigrants into the United States. Selzer says that economic practices and policies in Latin America are primary contributors to the extreme poverty of most Latinos.

"The United States has created this problem in many ways, and although the practices of our government and U.S. businesses could not succeed without the complicity of the powerful people in Latin America, it is still the economic and political power of the United States that is controlling the game," he says.

More than 60 people participated in the prayer vigil, which was designed "to reflect the human cost of all of this," Selzer says. The event was organized by Selzer's employer, the Coalition for Justice.

"People are still crossing," Selzer says. "That's just a fact that will continue until we look at illegal immigration as the much bigger problem that it really is." *Christy Risser*

Send comfort and joy to refugees

Akron, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is collecting Comfort 'n Joy bundles to send this fall to refugees in Bosnia and Serbia, to arrive in time for Christmas. "More than a half million refugees displaced by civil war are still unable to return home," says Brenda Wagner, Constituency Ministries director. "These refugees are hard pressed to make a living in precarious situations and a difficult economy." Bread of Life, MCC's Christian partner agency in the region, will distribute the bundles. MCC hopes to collect at least 4,000 bundles from the United States and Canada.

To assemble a bundle, purchase the following items, wrap them in a blanket, place them in a bag and bring or send them to the MCC office: comforter or blanket, deodorant stick, hairbrush and comb, bath towel, toothpaste, four toothbrushes, four bars of bath soap, package of disposable razors, pair of mittens or warm gloves (adult or children), hard candy, Christmas card with flat ornament/photo (optional), a (new) small stuffed animal. Contact your regional or provincial office for delivery deadlines and with any other questions you may have.

Of the 185 countries in the world, reports *The Defense Monitor*, only Somalia and the United States have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which would limit the use of children as soldiers. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kan., will celebrate its 75th anniversary Oct. 11-12. The church started as a mission of Burrton (Kan.) Mennonite Church in 1912. For more information on the celebration, contact First Mennonite Church, 52 Rambler Road, Hutchinson, KS 67502; (316) 662-9385.

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Mennonite Central Committee is sponsoring a United Nations seminar Oct. 9-11 in New York City. The seminar, "A Bewildering New Place: the Changing Nature of Conflict and Humanitarian Aid," will explore connections between the Mennonite community and the international political community. For more information, contact Edgar Janz at the MCC United Nations Liaison Office, phone and fax (212) 673-7970, or e-mail nymcc@aol.com.

• • •

ABC's new fall TV ad campaign includes statements like, "If you ask us, kids don't watch enough TV," "Books are overrated," "TV is like muscle—if you don't use it, you lose it" and, "Don't worry, you've got billions of brain cells." The new campaign was blasted by TV-Free America, which calls it ABC's "effort to boost its dismal ratings." TV-Free America organizes an annual "National TV-Turnoff Week" in April. (*AFA Journal*)

Bluffton (Ohio) College now offers a new undergraduate major in youth ministries and recreation. The major is designed to prepare students for entry-level professional positions in church, camping and recreation ministries.

• • •

J. Harold Moyer, emeritus professor of music at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., received a 1997-98 ASCAP Award. He has received this award more than six times. The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers grants the awards to assist and encourage composers of classical or serious music.

• • •

Russian president Boris Yeltsin did not sign a proposed law on religious organizations that would have established the primacy of the Russian Orthodox Church (see Aug. 26 issue). According to Reuters, Yeltsin said the law contradicted Russia's constitution guaranteeing equality for all faiths. Pope John Paul II wrote a personal letter to Yeltsin complaining about the proposed bill; the United States voted in July to reduce U.S. aid to Russia by $200 million if the bill became law. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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Mary Kuepfer, a 22-year-old Old Order Amish woman from Milverton, Ont., received 50 stitches in her face after a beer bottle thrown at her buggy exploded in her face. Kuepfer was interviewed on Canadian national television and had her picture on the front page of the local paper. The July 22 *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* ran the headline "Victim Refuses to Be Angry." While non-Amish local residents are outraged by the incident and have offered a reward for finding the perpetrator, Kuepfer's father said the family's main concern was that the person who threw the bottle become aware of what happened to Mary. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

COMMENTARY

Altering the blueprint for success

Editor's note: *Chicago Opportunity for Peace in Action, or COPA (Spanish for "cup"), is a short-term service program jointly sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes, Illinois Mennonite Conference of the Mennonite Church and Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church.*

Fresno, Ohio—Imagine sleeping with nine people in the basement of a cabin-sized house, painting a dilapidated church and worshiping in Spanish with illegal immigrants. This was all part of my experience with COPA.

My youth group and I left for Chicago early on a Sunday morning in June, headed to a Hispanic neighborhood of inner-city Chicago. I was nervous. I had never participated in a service project and didn't know what to expect. Would we spend all our time banging nails into rotten porches while trying to communicate with a solely Spanish-speaking host?

My fears disappeared long before our first day was over. We had a terrific time. From riding the elevated train to repainting an elementary school converted from a warehouse, the "service" part of COPA was fun.

The real focus of COPA, though, was to introduce middle-class, Anglo kids like me to a life totally different from our own. The experience benefitted me, in particular, far more than it did the recipients of our work. To me, happiness is the foundation of success. Spending five days in the inner city helped me rethink what the bricks and mortar of that foundation might be.

The first "truss" that needed rethinking was one always evident in Chicago: money. Both in its abundance and in its lack, money closed me in on all sides. On our free day in the city, my friends and I decided to go downtown. We walked miles up and down State Street and Michigan Avenue. We saw the Hard Rock Cafe and went into The Limited, stared at Marshall Fields and bought some Starbucks coffee. As we walked, we were also sworn at by irritated drivers, scammed by street walkers and "looked through" by almost everybody else.

The next day, as part of COPA's program, we visited a local thrift store. Divided into teams, we were each given a few dollars and a scenario. For example: "You have a job interview and $3 to spend. Find an outfit."

As my partner and I searched, I realized that here I was, looking for an outfit for $3, when yesterday, on Michigan Avenue, I could hardly have bought a cup of coffee for that much. I also noticed people at the thrift store chatting with each other as they announced a good find or admired the supply of formal dresses. They were enjoying life—even though they might only have had $3 for an outfit instead of $300.

I also learned other things about "success" during my time in Chicago. I had previously associated success with the pillars of power and security. Someone who has control over her life and is secure in her position must be happy.

At home I had been feeling mistreated because I did not have a car to drive to school. Yet these youth were happy to make it to school unharmed.

One afternoon we went to a Lake Michigan beach with the youth group of a local Mennonite church. Together we played softball, volleyball, water Frisbee and soccer. To see us laughing and playing, the only visual difference would have been that they all had black hair.

As I talked with the other group, I learned otherwise. Every day of their lives, those kids are in danger—not from familiar (to us) threats like car accidents but from shootings and beatings. Gangs are an integral part of their lives. Two boys refused to ride together in the same car because they were from rival gang neighborhoods. One member could not walk three blocks to school without being beaten up. It mattered little if they were members of a gang; guilt was assumed by association.

At home I had been feeling mistreated because I did not have a car to drive to school. Yet these youth were happy to make it to school unharmed. Although other people had taken control of their lives from them, they were playing and sharing plans for the future.

Unexpectedly, Chicago revealed to me a structure of happiness I had not previously considered. Surrounding me was hope. For dinner one night we visited a woman named Vicky. Her house was tiny and in a state of disrepair. An illegal immigrant, Vicky had to support the seven people of her household by working as a nanny six days a week in the suburbs. As she told us her life story, though, she was filled with hope. She hoped her sons would survive in the world, and her hope made her try to improve her situation.

My experience with COPA altered my blueprint for success. I learned that material possessions and security do not necessarily lead to happiness. Surprisingly, I discovered that hope, together with faith and community, can withstand the eroding forces of poverty, danger and alienation.

Gracias, Vicky, Manuel and Oscar, for the lesson. *Jael Malenke, Fresno, Ohio*

Building faith in humanity

Marisa Doncevic

Cane Valley, Ky. (MDS)—Summer 1997 was a busy season for Mennonite Disaster Service as youth and young adults from North America worked at sites from California to Ohio. Timothy Gray, left, and Brendan Meyers of Springfield Mennonite Church in Quakertown, Pa., work on a house heavily damaged when a tornado ripped through Cane Valley earlier this year.

Two young adults served as long-term volunteers at Cane Valley. Ted Houser, 21, from Lancaster County, Pa., had taken a year off from Goshen (Ind.) College to learn carpentry. As summer approached, he decided he had spent enough time earning money and "storing up his own treasures."

Houser was in Cane Valley from mid-June until Aug. 8, working as crew leader for the various youth groups that came to work. "My skills improved," he says. "Before, I was always told what to do, but here, I had to take responsibility, assess the problem and decide on the best solution."

Houser encourages other college students to volunteer for MDS. "MDS needs young physical and mental energy, but this is also a great way to learn from the older generation. People need to realize that volunteering like this will give them a satisfaction they won't [always] get from a paid job.

"Volunteering encourages others," he says. "It gives them a new faith in humanity."

For more information, phone Carla Hunt at (717) 859-2210, write MDS, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, or e-mail menno_disaster_service@ecunet.org. *Marisa Doncevic*

The Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale, held Aug. 1-2, raised $210,000 for Mennonite Central Committee. An 1885 New Era parlor organ brought in $625; a "giant dahlia" quilt sold for $2,000. Attenders ate $10,658 worth of barbecued chicken. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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NASA plans an Oct. 6 launch of a plutonium-loaded space probe. The Cassini probe will go first to Venus, then will hurtle back to Earth in 1999 to build up velocity to shoot past Jupiter to Saturn. The probe will be loaded with 72.3 pounds of plutonium 238, the most ever carried by a space device. Critics of the venture include scientists both inside and outside NASA. They list concerns about the site of the launch (Kennedy Space Center in Florida) and the possibility of an accident with the probe's launcher, a Titan IV rocket. Other critics contend that solar batteries could power the probe. Only a presidential order can stop the launch. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Two teenagers involved in a recent car vandalism case in Newton, Kan., were invited to prepare and eat a meal together with one of their victims as a way to restore relationships. The victim, a gourmet cook, had found out that both boys worked as cooks in local restaurants. The menu for the meal included beef consomme with poultry ginger won tons, smoked trout with dilled mayonnaise, roasted rock cornish hen with cranberry sauce, and mixed green salad with lemon tahini dressing. The victim was impressed with the boys' willingness to do what was necessary to "repair the damage"; the boys were astonished at their victim's kindness and acceptance of them as valuable members of the community. (Eleanor Wiebe, *OVM Newsletter*)

Gary and Jean Isaac, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission workers in South Africa, received Xhosa names from African Independent Church leaders. Jean is Nokwakha ("to build") and Gary is Sakhiwo (a large permanent building with a strong foundation). The Isaacs say, "Our friends chose these names to emphasize the role we have had with them in building relationships—with God and with each other. We felt greatly honored when this happened." (*COMmunicator*)

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A Canadian man is walking across Canada to raise funds for the hungry in North Korea. Jay Won, of Markham, Ont., began a "Walk for Lives" on June 2 in Halifax, N.S. He walked 1,500 kilometers the first month. He plans to arrive in Vancouver this fall, then go to South Korea and continue his walk into North Korea. Won is encouraging Canadians to make contributions to Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which has been providing food aid to North Korea. (*ChristianWeek*)

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A new Northwest Corporate Accountability website has been established for stockholders and interested others. David E. Ortman of Seattle developed the site after assisting the Seattle Mennonite Church with a shareholder resolution filed with Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold concerning their mining activities in Indonesia. The Northwest Corporate Accountability website contains a step-by-step outline of how to file shareholder resolutions. The site lists annual meeting places, dates and deadlines for filing shareholder resolutions on more than 75 Washington-based corporations, executive pay and compensation information, links to related websites and more. The Northwest Corporate Accountability Project is located at www.scn.org/earth/wum/. (*David Ortman*)

COMMENTARY

MVS worker feels 'privileged to have a choice'

Editor's note: *Melani Guengerich, a native of Harrisonburg, Va., is a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker in Austin, Texas. Guengerich and her fellow MVSer, Jenni Holsinger, were evicted from their unit house in March by Austin city officials. This experience of being temporarily 'homeless,' combined with her work as the children's program coordinator for Foundation for the Homeless, a not-for-profit organization that provides assistance to homeless families, led Guengerich to reflect on new understandings of the situation of the homeless. MVS is a joint program of the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Home Ministries and the Mennonite Church's Mennonite Board of Missions.*

Austin, Texas—I feel like the experiences I have had so far have been about as many as I expected for the whole year. Many revelations have come about through our homeless stint.

After we were evicted, I felt as though I could understand just a little what homelessness must be like. While we searched for a house, I found myself constantly exhausted. It was hard to make myself show up for work each day. The all-consuming thought was, "When and where are we going to find a house?"

It made me understand a little better why it is so hard for the homeless to find work and keep a job. House-hunting is a full-time job, and it is emotionally draining. We were turned down repeatedly. There were many places we were not able to afford. We put time and energy into seeming wild-goose chases. Everyone had lots of advice, yet we received very little actual help.

I was so thankful for the support systems we had in place. There was never a doubt in my mind that MVS would prevent us from sleeping under bridges. I can hardly fathom how hard it must be to have no support.

In Sunday school, I have found myself defending the homeless, whom some are so quick to call lazy. The homeless are not lazy. They have been a part of circumstances (sometimes out of their control) that have a high amount of stress. From personal experience, I can vouch for the difficulty in working when a place to call home—and make a home—is in question.

Before entering MVS, I prayed God would teach me and help me trust more. I didn't suspect I would have to trust God for such a simple, basic need as housing. I have learned to trust God more already. God does answer prayers and provides—though not always as expected.

Material things: I've received another revelation. I have a little more understanding of the desire to accumulate material things. When I took my kids to the zoo, I was very conscious of their poverty, because they couldn't do everything all the other kids were doing—pony rides, train rides, etc.

For one day, I wanted my kids to be able to forget they were poor. That is much easier said than done. I wanted them to do everything all the other kids did. I struggled with the train ride—I wasn't sure I had enough money in the budget, yet I really wanted to give them everything they wanted. I succumbed to the concept that money—a train ride—could buy happiness.

Christy Risser

Melani Guengerich

I realized just a little the struggle these kids' parents—who love them so much more than I do—deal with. I understand now why impoverished parents buy their children Nike shoes and apparel or whatever all the middle-class kids are wearing.

Choosing to live simply is a privilege. Would I believe that money can't buy happiness if I never had money? Maybe the reason I can believe that is because I feel fairly confident I will always have enough to eat or a place to live. No matter what my choice of a lifestyle—whether simple or materialistic—I am extremely rich and so different from those who live in poverty. I am privileged enough to have the choice. *Melani Guengerich*

Volunteer speaks for voiceless in nation's capital

Washington (MCC U.S.)—Sometimes it feels to Dana Bicksler like everything in the nation's capital revolves around money.

That's how she describes what she sees as government officials' preoccupation with the federal budget. Bicksler, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. service worker here, helps promote a different point of view.

"Faith-based groups [such as MCC] have something unique to offer in Washington," says Bicksler, a staff person in MCC's Washington Office. "In speaking for poor and forgotten people, such as immigrants, we stress the dignity of human beings—that all are made in the image of God."

Broadly described as advocacy, the mandate of Washington Office staff involves a wide range of activities. "Advocacy is different from lobbying," Bicksler says. "Advocacy means promoting the interests of others, while lobbying means acting on the basis of self-interest.

"We try to speak on behalf of poor and forgotten people who do not get heard by politicians," she says.

Immigrants are one such group of "voiceless" people for whom advocacy groups try to speak. However, Bicksler is frustrated that few immigrant advocacy groups seemed to be working from a faith-based perspective.

So, she says, "I started looking for other people who wanted to talk about how our faith affects advocacy on immigration—about our unique perspective."

Working with staff from Church World Service and the United Methodist Church, she organized a noon-hour discussion on how faith affects immigration advocacy. "I sensed a lot of excitement," she says. "We feel we do have something unique to offer, particularly in advocating [for] undocumented immigrants."

What is that unique perspective? "We [as faith groups] stress the dignity of human beings and raise questions about an immigration system that categorizes people as 'legal' or 'illegal.'" She notes recent graffiti in her mainly Hispanic neighborhood that proclaimed, "Human beings are not aliens!"

Bicksler's "territory" covers a range of domestic issues, including welfare, immigration, and civil rights for people of color. She also monitors legislation related to Asia.

What does all this involve? "I read MCC field worker reports, Mennonite and Brethren in Christ periodicals and numerous newspapers. I also meet with several 'working groups,' most of which are faith-based."

Working groups form to share information about and influence legislation on particular issues. "And we can have an impact," says Bicksler, "although it's often small and always unpredictable."

In the past year, for example, religiously motivated advocates helped defeat bills to dismantle federal Medicaid and Food Stamp programs. They succeeded in recasting these issues as not purely budgetary concerns but also directly related to human need.

What led Bicksler to this kind of work? "I studied social work at Messiah College [in Grantham, Pa.]," she says, "and was interested in racism and other social justice issues."

When this MCC placement became available, it fit the bill for Bicksler: "I wanted a way to fight systemic injustice," she says, "and this gave me a way to do that." She is also interested in law and wanted to work in an environment where she could explore that as a profession.

J. Daryl Byler

Image of God: *Dana Bicksler, right, and Mitra Battan are co-workers in the Washington Office of Mennonite Central Committee U.S.*

Has her work in the Washington Office set a career direction for Bicksler? "Well," she says, "I don't want to be a politician." *Deborah Fast*

Americans who read the Bible at least once a week scored higher on being more satisfied with life, experiencing more joy and knowing there is a purpose for their life, says a new survey by Market Facts, Inc. Of those who read the Bible more than once a week, 64 percent say they feel full of joy all or most of the time, compared with just 35 percent of those who read it less than once a month; 87 percent feel at peace all or most of the time, compared with 58 percent of respondents who read the Bible less than once a month. (*Tyndale House*)

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Mennonite Economic Development Associates has opened a new microenterprise office in Romania. Christopher Shore, MEDA's regional manager for Eastern Europe, moved from Moscow to Bucharest, capital of Romania, to help World Vision establish a Romanian program of microlending. He will also be a resource for regional microenterprise work in Romania, Bosnia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Shore says that while Romania is a poor country, "its village system wasn't destroyed by the Communists, so there are a lot of microenterprises like bakers, wood workers, furniture makers and shoemakers." (*MEDA*)

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Bethel College's 27th annual Fall Festival will be held Oct. 2-5 on the Bethel campus in North Newton, Kan. Programming for all ages includes arts and crafts displays, music and other entertainment, athletic competitions, alumni events and four performances of Larry Shue's comedy "The Nerd." The Festival of Lace Making, a first-time event, will demonstrate needlework arts: tatting, bobbin lace, netting, crocheting, Battenberg lace and other styles. Queen Bey, internationally known jazz and blues singer, will perform on Saturday. For a complete schedule or to purchase tickets for individual events, call (316) 284-5281 or write the Bethel College Ticket Office, 300 East 27th, North Newton, KS 67117.

Record

MCC—Mennonite Central Committee

Dennis Hope is selling the moon. First he wrote the White House, the Kremlin, the United Nations and others, "staking his claim." No one objected. By mid-June he had sold 10,000 parcels of 1,777 acres each. The price is $15.99 plus tax and shipping. Hope is also the sole owner of the whole universe other than earth. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Twenty-five years ago, a group of friends who first met in a Mennonite church in New York City started getting together every July at Spruce Lake Retreat in Pennsylvania. Last year, Gideon B. Miller, a pilot for TWA, even changed flight plans so he wouldn't miss the annual gathering. But he did miss it. Miller, 57, was one of 230 passengers on TWA flight 800 when it went down off Long Island, N.Y., July 17, 1996. On July 19, 1997, the group of friends—called the "Gid Miller Gang"—met again at Spruce Lake and dedicated memorials to Miller and to Shirley Grace, a member of the group who died of cancer in 1991: money for a gazebo and a tree, planted at the gathering. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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A Mennonite pastor in the former Soviet Union (FSU) is trying to help link isolated Mennonites there through a newsletter. Willi Peters, pastor of the Mennonite church in Novosibirsk, Russia, has been producing and distributing the newsletter since early this year. The newsletter, which is entirely in Russian, includes a biblical meditation, along with news from congregations and individuals in the FSU and reports from the global Mennonite fellowship. Anyone with relatives or friends who live in the FSU and are interested in receiving a Russian-language Mennonite newsletter may add them to the mailing list by sending the address, in Russian printing or typescript, to Commission on Overseas Mission, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4. (*GCMC News Service*)

MINISTERS

Gordon Allaby was ordained May 18 as pastor at Dover (Ohio) Christian Fellowship.

James Bartsch has resigned as youth pastor at Emmanuel Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

Michael Chandler is pastor at Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Dave Esau is resigning from Sherbrooke Church, Vancouver, in November.

Dawn Yoder Harms is associate pastor at Akron (Pa.) Church.

David Hobson is associate pastor at Eben-Ezer Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

Dora and **George Hoeppner** are senior pastors at Bethel Church, Aldergrove, B.C.

Doug Pankratz is associate pastor of student ministries at Cedar Valley Church, Mission, B.C.

WORKERS

Linda Beaupre and **John Hutton**, Hope Church, Winnipeg, are beginning four-year MCC terms in Recife, Brazil. Linda will be coordinator of volunteers for an AIDS project and John a conflict resolution worker.

Steven Dueck, Carman (Man.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Alkmaar, the Netherlands, working with a homeopathic medicine company.

Monica Flask is director of the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Shauna Friesen, Ottawa (Ont.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in La Chaux-d'Abel, Switzerland, as a housekeeper at the Hotel Pension La Chaux-d'Abel.

Helena Guenther, Winkler (Man.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Hemsbach, Germany, as a nanny.

Benjamin L. Harder is instructor in English at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

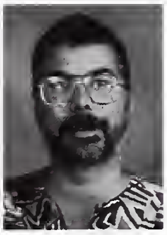
David S. Janzen is assistant professor of computer science at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Joy L. Lapp is instructor in Bible and religion for 1997-98 at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Monica A. Meissen is assistant professor of mathematics at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Ross Mussleman II, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., is

Beaupre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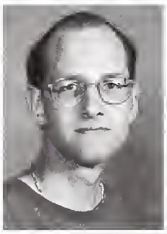
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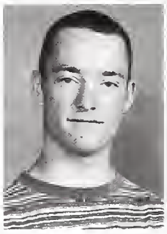
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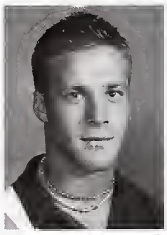
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Woodyard

beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Hannover, Germany, as a groundskeeper.

Paul Jonathan Neudorf, Olivet Church, Abbotsford, B.C., and of Pincher Creek, Alta., is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Enkenbach, Germany, as a nurse's aide in a senior citizen home.

Heidi Peters, First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Limburgerhof, Germany, working and living on a vegetable farm.

Jon Kingsbury Piper is associate professor of biology at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Ubaldo Rodriguez, Community of Hope Mennonite Church, Dallas, Texas, is beginning a one-year MCC term in Dallas as a service intern.

Angela Roth, Eigenheim Church, Rosthern, Sask., is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, as assistant caretaker at the Singelkerk Mennonite Church.

Kristen K. Sayler is clinical instructor for the nursing department at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Sandra Schwarz, Waterloo-Kitchener (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, as a clerk and part-time as a nanny.

Werner Siemens, Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Reichenbach, Germany, as a farm laborer .

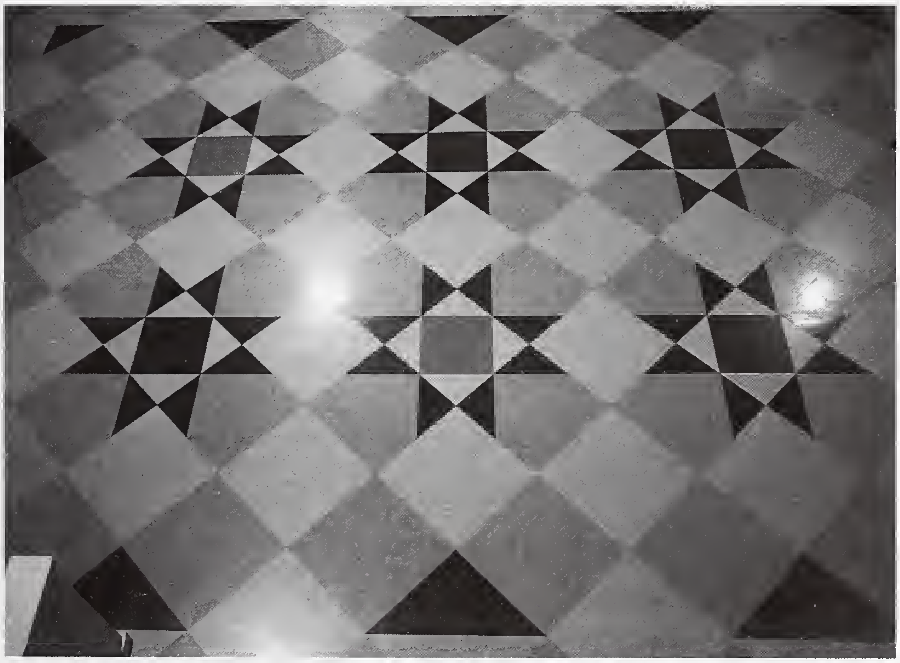
Ryan Lee Scott Wall, Lowe Farm (Man.) Bergthaler Church, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Kapellen-Drusweiler, Germany, as a farm laborer.

J. Anthony Weber, Akron (Pa.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Aalsmeer, the Netherlands, working in a flower nursery.

Mark Weidner will be vice president for administration and advancement at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary beginning next spring.

Caili Woodyard, Ottawa (Ont.) Church, is beginning a one-year MCC Intermenno term in Arlesheim, Switzerland, where she will work as a housekeeper, nanny and gardener.

Following the pattern


David E. Ortman

Mennonites and Amish are known for their quilts, but quilt motifs are seldom part of their places of worship. This "quilt pattern" floor tiling, however, can be found in the Seattle Mennonite Church. The congregation bought an old movie theater in the northeast part of Seattle and renovated it in 1993. Linda Pauw, Debbie Shank Miller and Linda Bade designed the pattern for the floor tiles. *David E. Ortman*

The Inuit people (Eskimos living in Canada) will have their own territory, "Nunavut," beginning in 1999, reports *World Press Review*. The region, now part of the Northwest Territory, will cover 733,000 square miles and will be inhabited by about 22,000 people, 85 percent of them Inuit. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

• • •

The General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches will not be dissolving, at least for now. The binational denomination, which met July 10-13 in Waterloo, Ont., instead approved a plan to create a task force to look at all layers of conference structures and make a recommendation in two years on whether to dissolve. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

• • •

On Aug. 12, two Palestinian journalists received death threats from an Israeli Defense Force soldier. The incident followed IDF assaults on Palestinian journalists on Aug. 2, in which one of the same journalists, Nayef Hashlamoon, was beaten. Oren Israel, an IDF soldier who took part in the Aug. 2 attack that injured Hashlamoon, threatened, "I won't beat you like before. Now I want to kill you, and if you take a picture I'll kill you." He continued, "Take a picture! Take a picture! What? Are you afraid? Take a picture!" The journalists stopped taking pictures. Since the soldiers still had Hashlamoon's press pass, the journalists stayed at the scene and used their mobile phones to call the Israeli police in Hebron, who refused to come to the checkpoint. After 30 minutes, an army officer came, returned the press card and gave the journalists full permission to continue photographing. Hashlamoon, a 44-year-old father of five and director of the Hebron-based Al Watan Center for the promotion of nonviolence, has been assaulted by IDF soldiers twice in the last year in addition to the Aug. 2 attack. (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

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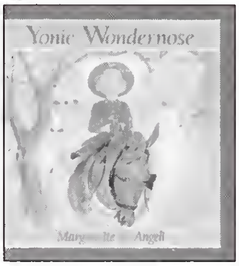

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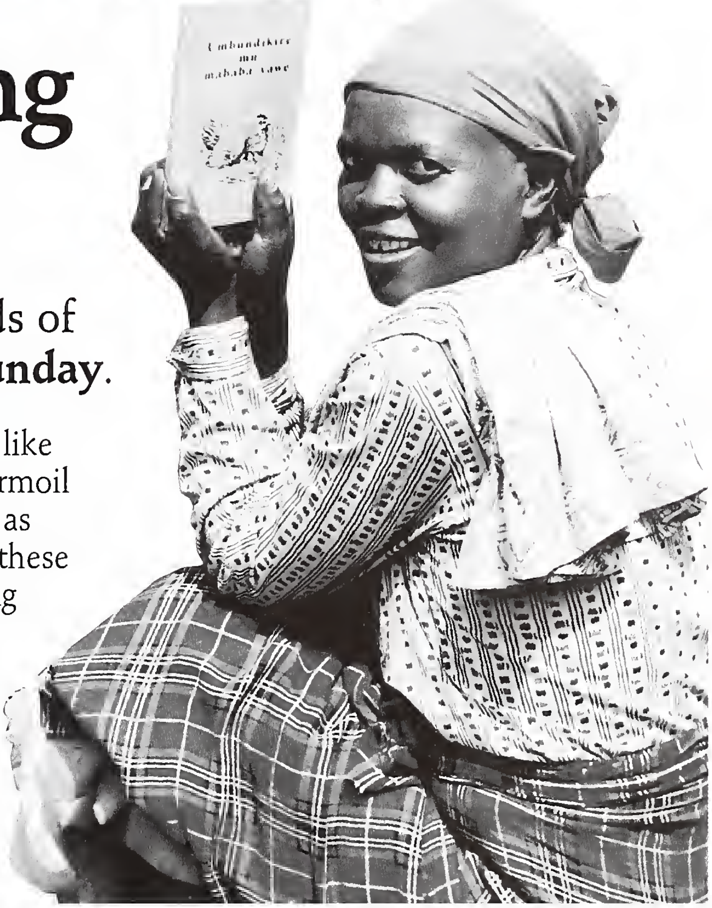

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Reviews

BOOKS

UNBALANCED THEOLOGY

When God Doesn't Answer: Removing Roadblocks to Answered Prayer *by Woodrow Kroll (Baker Books, 1997, 189 pages, $11.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind.

Books about prayer are usually welcome in my collection, and I often recommend them to others. However, this book is not one of those.

Written by Woodrow Kroll, a Bible teacher on an international radio broadcast, the book succeeds an earlier volume on prayer written by Kroll. The first book, *Empowered to Pray*, tells people how to get answers to their prayers.

An appealing feature of this book is frequent use of real people's stories and questions. Kroll tells of encounters with Christians who struggle with unanswered prayer: for example, a hurting wife praying for her irresponsible husband to get his life straightened out, or a middle-aged man praying for employment. These stories become the stepping-off place for reflections on why God does not answer prayer.

Among the reasons Kroll offers for unanswered prayer are cherishing sin in our hearts, forgetting to ask for what we need, asking with wrong motives, asking for the wrong things, being hindered by Satan and quitting too soon. While I recognize any of these as impediments to prayer, I have difficulty with the unbalanced theology of prayer that undergirds the discussion.

The book overemphasizes the human side of prayer and tends to treat prayer as a mechanical activity—a combination of certain steps and procedures.

I'm afraid many readers will conclude that if they only try harder and scrupulously examine their motives, their prayers will be answered. Not enough is said about prayer as a relationship with God that we enjoy because we love God, not because of what we want from God.

One perspective I missed in this book is the biblical teaching that the Holy Spirit prays in and through us—even in our weakness and imperfection (Romans 8:26-27). As humans, we will never get it right when it comes to prayer. But God has not left us alone. We have a mediator who carries our concerns to God. Thus we can be content to trust the outcome of prayer to God's just and loving purposes.

QUESTIONING PRAYER

When God Says No *by Leith Anderson (Bethany House, 1996, 208 pages, $10.99 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Chrystal Reichenbach, Marysville, Ohio

Prayer is one of the most powerful forces in the world, yet at the same time it is one of the least understood. It has existed for centuries, yet many people rarely understand the basis of what lies behind it.

What is prayer, anyway? How many times have you wondered why some people's prayers are answered with a "yes," while so many others are answered with a "no"? How can you tell what God's will is for you when you pray? Does prayer really change things? Is it all right to pray the same prayer over and over? How should we respond when the answers to our prayers are contradictory to what we prayed for, or when our prayers do not seem to be answered at all?

These are just some of the thought-provoking and widely asked questions about prayer that Leith Anderson addresses.

To understand the basis of what lies behind the answers to our prayers can seem confusing to us at times. The answers are not short, simple or easy. They stem from questions of the heart. Some answers are obvious and satisfying to us, while others cause us to question even further.

The basis of our prayer life is the communion with God, which expresses a relationship between us and God. That relationship is what will help us better understand the answers to our prayers and how we should respond to them. It boils down to faith, trust and an acceptance of who God is and what God does.When all our prayers have been prayed and all our answers received, we must decide if we will believe that God is good even though we weep over the answers God has sent.

This book is an excellent source for understanding the often asked questions on prayer. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to enhance their relationship to God in prayer through trust and faith.

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SPIRITUAL FORCE

Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts *by Charles V. Bryant (Upper Room, 1991, 183 pages, $9.95 U.S.) and* **Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts: A Workbook** *by John I. Penn (Upper Room, 1996, 77 pages, $5.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Dorothea Janzen, North Newton, Kan.

In the introduction to *Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts*, the author recounts his experience of burnout in ministry and how he came to a new understanding of the church as the body of Christ. Bryant's discovery was that the church works as a spiritual force through the spiritual gifts.

Bryant discusses the meaning and scope of spiritual gifts, their source, what they are and what they are not. However, most of the book is a description of 32 gifts that he has discovered in the New Testament. Each gift is described in detail, along with how it would be useful in the church. Some of his descriptions parallel what many have also learned through the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory or the Enneagram. Most readers will be familiar with many of the gifts listed, such as administration, faith, giving, healing, helps, mercy, miracles. Bryant has some additional ones, such as battle, humor, craftsmanship, martyrdom, singleness, spirit music and voluntary poverty, all supported with scriptural references.

Included is a grace-gifts inventory to assist people in discovering what their gifts might be.

This book would be useful for study by Sunday school classes, nominating committees, church boards and others responsible for choosing people to carry on the work of the church.

The book tends to be repetitious and at times too neat and simplistic. But having noted this, it would still be a good refresher course on spiritual gifts. It serves as a reminder that serving out of guilt to please others or "because no one else will do it" is not God's way of building up the church.

The companion workbook with suggestions for six sessions using Bryant's outline and material is a useful tool to use for group study.

Resources

- **The Video Story of India 1997** covers highlights of the recent Mennonite World Conference assembly in Calcutta. The 30-minute video is available in the U.S. from Mennonite Media Ministries, 1-800-999-3534, e-mail beth@mennomedia.org, $24.45 U.S. post-paid; or in Canada from Mennonite World Conference, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1, fax (519) 571-1980, e-mail 74737.1611@compuserve.com, $32.45 Cdn.
- **Dead, Buried and Living in Hebron** is a 22-minute video exploring the nature of the conflict in the West Bank; includes a 16-page study guide. It is available for rental or purchase from Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680-6508; (312) 445-1199; e-mail cpt@igc.apc.org.
- **Peace book wraps** for upper elementary to high school students are available in Christian and non-Christian versions for distribution in public schools. Order from Peace and Justice Committee, P.O. Box 173, Orrville, OH 44667-0173; (330) 683-6844; e-mail smlandis@aol.com; 25 cents each plus postage.
- **Peace resources** for congregations and outreach are available, including book wraps, bookmarks, brochures, costumes, cooperative games and more. For a complete list, contact Peace and Justice Committee, P.O. Box 173, Orrville, OH 44667-0173; (330) 683-6844; e-mail smlandis@aol.com.
- **A Door of Hope: Spiritual Conflict in Pastoral Ministry** by Robert Thornton Henderson (Herald Press, 1997, $11.99 U.S./$17.25 Cdn.) provides pastors with a biblical understanding of the church's redemptive participation in Jesus' victory over cosmic powers.
- **Images of the Church in Mission** by John Driver (Herald Press, 1997, $19.99 U.S./$28.50 Cdn.) studies 12 biblical images for understanding the church, including pilgrimage, God's new order, peoplehood and transformation.
- **American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice** by Dana L. Robert (MARC, 1997, $30 U.S.) covers the modern mission era, 1792-1997.
- **Gathered in the Word: Praying the Scripture in Small Groups** by Norvene Vest (Upper Room, 1997, $8.95 U.S.) focuses on the practice of "lectio divina" (divine reading), in the context of small prayer groups, as a way to reveal meaning in Scripture.
- **Leading Cell Worship** is a set of two videos for pastors, cell worship leaders, cell members and personal use with instruction by Twila Brickman showing how worship in a cell church differs from worship in a traditional church. Available for $79.95 U.S. plus shipping from Touch Outreach Ministries, 1-800-735-5865; (281) 497-7901; fax (281) 497-0904; web: www.touchusa.org.

Flatrock Mennonite Church, an established rural congregation located in Flatrock, B.C., 30 miles east of Fort St. John, is seeking **a pastor**. Position open immediately.

Send resume to **Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Brad Giesbrecht, Box 179, Cecil Lake, BC V0C 1G0; (250) 781-3580.**

Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa., is looking for **an assistant pastor**. The job description entails half-time involvement with youth leaders and youth of the congregation; the other half-time involves visitation, preaching and other pastoral tasks as defined by the Spiritual Council.

Please send resume to **Grace Mennonite Church, 630 York Ave., Lansdale, PA 19446.**

Mennonite Mutual Aid is seeking **a programmer/analyst** to analyze, design, develop and/or purchase business software for our AS/400 and PC-LAN environment. The right person for this job will have or will be completing a bachelor's degree in an area such as management information systems, business, finance, accounting, computer science, mathematics, etc. This person will also possess strong skills in such areas as working with people, communications, planning, organizing and leadership potential. Two to five years of related experience is preferred. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. MMA offers an excellent, smoke-free work environment and a competitive benefit package.

Please send or fax resume to **Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax (219) 533-5264.**

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Editorial

Labels

Jesus shunned misleading labels in favor of authentic, face-to-face encounters. Labels diminish and objectify. We use them to fit people into our neat categories. But Jesus wouldn't allow himself to be treated this way. If we are to be his followers, we must deal with him face to face, on his terms.

In Mark 8:27-38, Jesus asks his disciples how others label him. How does he play in the media?

Then he says, What about you? Peter speaks for the group and calls him "Messiah." This is a political term Jews used to refer to the one who was to come and restore Israel to its honored place over the nations.

Way to go, Peter! we think. But, lo and behold, Jesus silences ("sternly ordered") him. This is the same word used earlier in Mark of Jesus silencing demons (1:25; 3:12) and the wind (4:39). Jesus doesn't want this false label applied to him. He does not want people joining him under false pretenses.

He teaches the disciples that he must suffer. He refers to himself as the "Son of Man," or "Human One." It refers to the figure in the Book of Daniel, which was, like Mark, written at a time of persecution to encourage believers to stand firm in their resistance to worldly powers.

> ***To follow Jesus means to give up our ideas of a convenient messiah and take the side of "the Human One."***

Because of the way I've opposed the current political/religious system, Jesus says, the elders, chief priests and scribes will join together to have me killed. He says this "openly." Here's who I am. He's defying the authorities.

Peter rebukes Jesus, though he tries to do it secretly. Jesus turns and looks at his disciples and rebukes Peter—openly. He calls him Satan (or adversary). He says that Peter is not committed to God but to humans. You can't sit on the fence, Jesus says. It's either my way or no way.

Then Jesus addresses not only Peter and the disciples but the crowd as well. He gives three commands: (1) deny yourself, (2) take up your cross, (3) follow me.

This section is one of the most misused parts of Scripture in terms of avoiding what the text says. "Cross" does not refer to trials, whether it's being sick or having a bad day. It's not a piece of jewelry you wear around your neck. For Jesus' listeners, it meant only one thing: it's what the Romans used to execute insurrectionists (people they thought were trying to overthrow the government).

These "criminals" were forced to carry the cross they were hung on. The cross was a symbol of shame. Those crucified were stripped of all their clothes and displayed publicly at a prominent place.

Persecution: Mark wrote his Gospel to Christians facing persecution. In the courtroom they had to either profess Jesus or deny him. To profess him they had to deny themselves. This led them to the cross.

In our day we are not facing persecution. We won't be hauled to court and sentenced to death for professing Jesus. But if we truly follow him, will we not be in conflict with unjust rulers?

We want our children to come to Jesus and follow him. But we dare not encourage them to do so simply because we do. Part of being Anabaptist is that each disciple must make that choice to follow Jesus freely, not under coercion.

And when we invite others to follow Jesus, we need to be clear what we are inviting them to. What—or whom— are they choosing to follow?

And what about ourselves? What label do we put on Jesus? Is he the messiah we want? The one who will come and fix all our problems? Or does he come to confront evil and suffer the consequences? Does he invite us to do the same? Is he simply a personal friend or the one who leads us on the path of God's kingdom? To follow Jesus means to give up our ideas of a convenient messiah and take the side of "the Human One."

God, help us to do so. *Gordon Houser*

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Inside

Fame and glory / p. 7

Interpreters of life and truth / p. 10

Film review: *A Thousand Acres* / p. 22

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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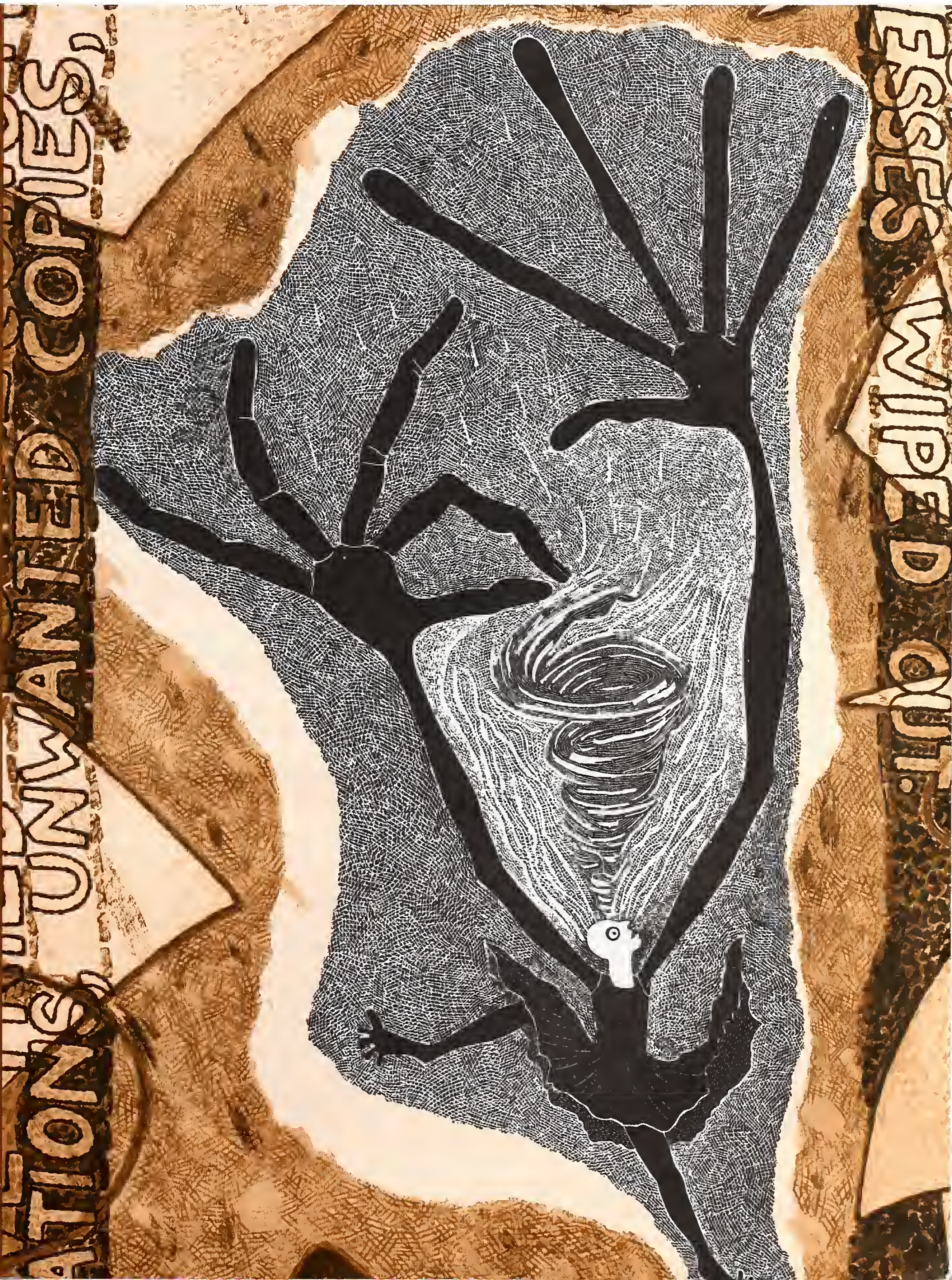
ART
IN COMMUNITY

- Art shaped in community (page 3)
- Art in a barn and a train station (page 6)
- Music for the right reasons (page 8)



Prologue

Art shapes us in ways we don't often realize. And we as a community of faith can help shape artists, either negatively or positively. We are fortunate to have a number of gifted artists in our midst; this issue focuses only on a few. Find those in your congregation or circle of acquaintances and offer your encouragement, for creating art can be a lonely and often thankless task.

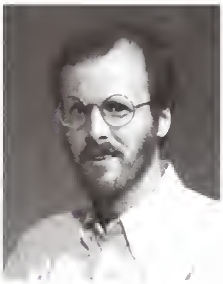
Assistant editor Melanie Zuercher interviewed Lora Jost (page 3), who lives in Lawrence, Kan. Likely you have already noticed Lora's work in our magazine (see our July 22 cover). You will see more.

A circle of artists has emerged in the area around Rosthern, Sask. Profiles by Debra Fieguth (and photos by her father, Menno) of five of these appear on pages 6-9.

Read the satiric poem by Mary Kennan Herbert (page 7) and be challenged by whatever lesson it might offer.

Ervin Beck offers an overview of Mennonite writers and their work (page 10). You may want to buy some of these books and read them.

Still on the theme of art, see the piece in our news section (page 16) about the sculpture by Esther and Michael Augsburger.



Don't forget to send us a paragraph about a memorable article or illustration from your years of reading *The Mennonite*. We especially welcome hearing from long-time readers. *gh*

Next issue: Disabilities

Cover: Detail from *Whoooooosh!* by Lora Jost

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The artwork of Lora Jost shows that some of Mennonites' best characteristics are elements that also shape art and can help it define faith.

6 Art in a barn and a train station

Vicki Dyck and Kathy Thiessen have turned old, unused buildings into places of beauty, where art is shared.

7 Fame and glory

8 Music for the right reasons

Three Saskatchewan artists have helped make music an enjoyable part of worship.

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The Mennonite is a member of Associated Church Press, Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse (a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group) and an associate member of Canadian Church Press.

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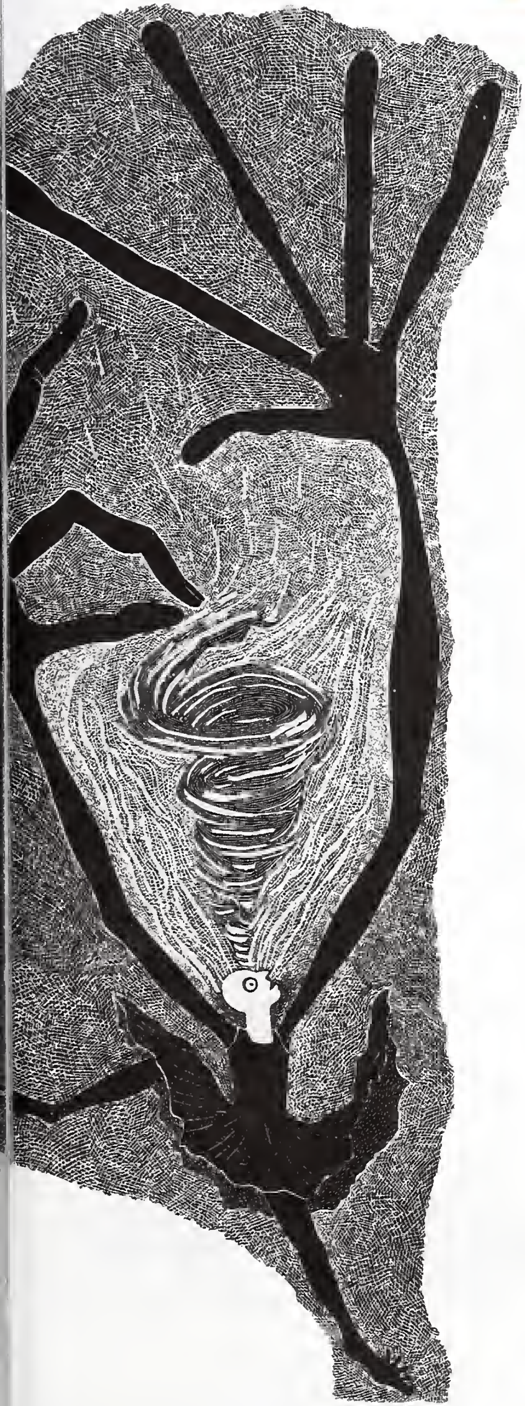
ART SHAPED IN COMMUNITY

The artwork of Lora Jost shows that some of Mennonites' best characteristics are elements that also shape art and can help it define faith.

Melanie A. Zuercher



It's doubtful that something called "Mennonite art" can be indentified through characteristics unique only to it. Lora Jost's art, however, exhibits aspects that could be linked to her religious heritage.

Lora, 32, grew up in North Newton, Kan., as a Bethel College "faculty kid." Her father, Walter, now retired, was a professor of music, and her mother, Mary Ann, worked at Community Playschool, a preschool program for children with special needs, located at the Bethel College Mennonite Church building.

As children, Lora and her brother, Scott, were "always encouraged to make things," she says. Today both have master of fine arts degrees. Lora's exhibit of mixed-media collage and scratchboard drawings, called "Meetings and Other Mysteries: Selections 1994-97," is on display (through Oct. 19) at Wheatfields Bakery and Cafe in Lawrence, Kan., where she lives. Scott is on the art faculty at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Lora graduated from Bethel in 1988, her undergraduate education having included a year in Washington, D.C., where she took some classes at American University and volunteered at the Community for Creative Nonviolence, a homeless shelter. At Bethel, "I created my own major," she says, "'liberal arts with a concentration in design and technology.' I was interested in so many things—how could I decide?"

Graduate school focused her art. Her time at the University of Wisconsin in Madison was "influential," she says, characterized by "a lot of collaborative work, specifically on social issues," and by her concentration on media still seen as a bit "out of the ordinary."

"I had one influential professor who considered herself an arts activist," Lora says. "She emphasized collaboration and nonstatic arts, including performance, video and installation." One type of installation Lora describes is "transforming a room, for example, into a unique environment."

One thing all these art forms have in common for Lora, she says, is that "they involve the use of many pieces of pictures, objects or even people's voices to create the whole. And many involve storytelling, which has carried over into my [later] work" that includes the collages and drawings that comprise her current exhibit.

Melanie A. Zuercher

> ***"There's a romantic view of artists having an individual, profound vision, but I learned that my art is always being influenced by other people and community/world events."*** **Lora Jost**

Mundane, whimsical, urgent:
Lora Jost with some of her work

Cradle: Another common characteristic of Lora's themes in her earlier work is community—which almost inevitably results from collaboration, which is the cradle that nurtures storytelling. "In Mennonite communities [like the one I grew up in], there's a lot of emphasis on community. That shapes us in a variety of ways.

"There's a romantic view of artists having an individual, profound vision," she says, "but I learned that my art is always being influenced by other people and community/world events."

Lora's major projects during her time in Madison clearly show these kinds of influences. For example, her M.F.A. project was a performance piece in which she met with different people over the course of a month to talk about community and how it is sometimes formed through conversation. The "finished" piece consisted of documentation of these conversations through video and collage—some of it centered on writing or drawing that Lora and her conversation partners did on tablecloths to help trace the conversation.

"One reason for this particular project was responding to a difficult political climate in the department at the time," she says. "Many of the people I talked to were other art students. Many of them told me, 'You should talk to so-and-so.' That's an example of how communities can build."

While Lora was living in Madison, the Persian Gulf War broke out (in 1991). She and other artists concerned with peace and justice issues formed a collective around their responses to the war, which they turned into a group exhibit.

Lora's contribution to a group show organized by the collective was a performance called "Stop the Bombing." She later created a video from footage shot of the performance. It depicted her daubing orange dots onto black tar paper, counting each dot out loud in a monotone, interspersed with video clips from other wars, such as the Vietnam War.

Bombing sorties: The tar paper, she says, was to help symbolize oil. A reviewer of the exhibit pointed out the ironic use of orange, "the color of safety," rather than blood red (the art collective opposing the war had promoted tying orange ribbons as a pro-peace symbol). The dots eventually numbered close to 100,000, an estimate of the number of Iraqi casualties during the Gulf War, as well as the number of bombing sorties flown by the United States and its allies.

Lora took the orange-dotted tar paper and created a book by cutting it into 100 page-sized pieces. She installed the pages—some of which included collage—by placing them on a wall in an exhibit she called "The Statistics are Numbing: In Commemoration of Those Who Died in the Persian Gulf War."

Another social issue on which Lora centered one of her Madison projects—this one to complete her M.F.A.—was the 1992 U.S. presidential elections. "I was interested in the campaign and the media attention that seemed to me to be focused on things that didn't really represent people's actual concerns," she says. "So I asked people to fax me images of what was important to them in their lives and communities, wherever they were, and then [in the installation] juxtaposed them with election coverage from *The New York Times.*"

The limitation Lora placed on the work she requested was that it must be faxed—meaning it had to fit within the space of an 8 1/2 X 11 piece of paper or could be broken down into pieces that size. She sent invitations for participation to other artists, both those she she knew and those she didn't, and to people working in nonprofit organizations "involved in politics and/or community issues. I was encouraging people in politics to make art, and artists to think about politics in their work."

Why fax? "I was looking for images that travel quickly across long distances," she says, giving as an example a Gulf War image of former U.S. president George Bush that showed up in a number of places. "It was an organizing tool, in a way—developing a network around political and justice and peace issues."

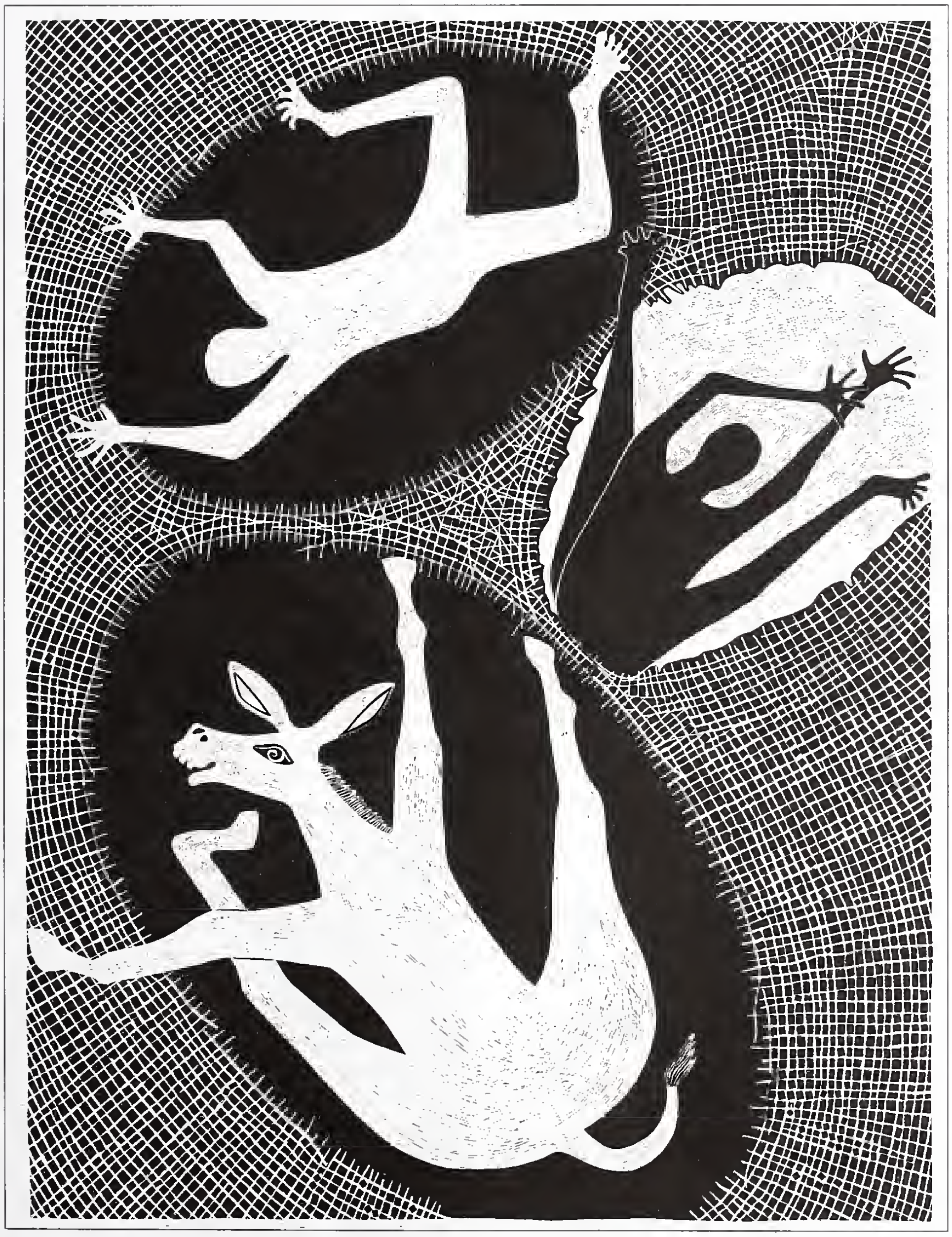
"Aren't artists supposed to struggle, worry and nurture their creations to life over a period of months, or at least days?" one reviewer of "Fax Art Response" asked. Then, answering his own question, he wrote, "Something's happening here, maybe not art as we like to know it, but a fresh kind of collective transcontinental communique." Lora received more than 100 responses from across the United States as well as Europe.

Later, during the run of a smaller show based on faxed and mailed art-responses to the election, Lora told another reviewer, "I think it's important for artists to engage technology—particularly sophisticated technology—so that it's not just the elite or powerful who can use it."

In the last several years, Lora's work has moved away from collaboration and from forms so dependent on "community participation" but has not lost the essential elements of storytelling, social concern and the effects of the community that are prevalent in her earlier work.

Her current show has evolved from "Meetings and Other Mysteries"—on display at Bethel College's Fine Arts Center gallery earlier this year—and from a show called "Meetings" that she did in Bloomington, Ind., while her husband, Chuck Epp, was teaching at Indiana University.

Second-grade diary: One of the most striking pieces from "Meetings," which is also part of the current show and, Lora says, is one of her favorites, is a collage entitled "Today Is a Very Important Day (You may want to write about it in your diary)." The center of the piece is a page from Jost's own second-grade diary. It's surrounded by scraps of headlines and photos from the year 1972-73, in which President Nixon announced a provisional cease-fire with Vietnam (January 1973). The diary entry relates learning to write cursive p's and j's, activities with friends and the dutifully noted "President Nixon announced the cease-fire."



"Holes in the Safety Net" by Lora Jost

"Jost's artistic view of history," a Bloomington reviewer wrote, "[is that] underlying every institutional diction [is] the small, frail rhythm of the individual."

"One thing I'd want to say about my current work is that it represents the coming together of three kinds of elements: the mundane, or everyday life; the whimsical—silly stuff; life and death issues or a sense of urgency," Lora says. "A lot of my work has all three—that's the creative tension."

She is already thinking about her next project, which will likely focus on "stories of perseverance, with strange weather as an emotional backdrop. For example," she says, "I have a friend with endometriosis, who's in a lot of pain, and when she tells me stories about what it's like, she says it 'comes in waves,' and actually uses the word 'hurricane.'"

Weather motifs have been cropping up in Lora's most recent work. "Ever since I've returned to Kansas, I've been fascinated with tornadoes," she says.

So what is Mennonite about all this? This is not a fair question. Reflecting on her earlier work in performance art, Lora says, "There's something about Mennonite culture—it's about living something that is considered your faith. I wonder if that comes through in art that is 'Mennonite.' In performance art, there's often a blurring of the distinction between what is life and what is art. I think there's something about that that seems Mennonite, similar to blurring the line between life and faith, although it's not unique [to Mennonites].

"One's lived faith is intrinsically connected to one's art," she says. "For me, in some of my work, that's about some sense of justice."

It seems clear that art cannot and should not be labeled "Mennonite," or anything else. But the work of Lora Jost shows that some of Mennonites' best characteristics are elements that also shape art and can help it define faith.

Melanie A. Zuercher is assistant editor of The Mennonite. *Lora Jost's artwork has appeared previously in* The Mennonite*—see the cover of our July 22 issue.*

ART IN A BARN AND A TRAIN STATION

Vickie Dyck and Kathy Thiessen have turned old unused buildings into places of beauty, where art is shared.

Debra Fieguth

Vickie Dyck has been involved in theater ever since high school days at Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College, when she learned many of the technical aspects of drama production through Saskatoon's Persephone Theatre.

"The Barn," a sturdy old structure, is both a family and a community venture. The playhouse is on the farm of her parents, Peter and Tina Dyck, between Saskatoon and Rosthern. Family members helped clean and refurbish the building, which was at least 60 years old but hadn't been used for 20 years.

Sister Jane and her husband, Ray Friesen, run a craft shop with pieces from almost 200 people during the production season, while Vickie's mother takes care of ticket sales. Her father does maintenance and carpentry.

"My aim is community building," Vickie explains, "that we learn to respect each other and care about each other."

The choice of plays reflects that. Most plays feature a blend of ages, such as *Jake and the Kid*, portray positive values (*You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*) and appeal to a wide audience. Music is often an important part: The Barn has produced *Amahl and the Night Visitors*—an opera—as well as *Cotton-patch Gospel*—a bluegrass version of the gospel story.

Although not touted as a "Christian" theater, "the people doing the major work happen to be Christian," Vickie says, "and therefore those values come through." The plays' themes "reflect what we believe in."

From all over Saskatchewan audiences come to fill the 280-seat theater, which is open for two 10-day production runs in summer and a dinner theater (seating fewer) near Christmas. Visitors often arrive a few hours before curtain time to shop at the craft store, sample food at several booths, and enjoy music from local performers.

With several components, The Barn fills a need in the community as well as in those who contribute to it. "Everybody—somewhere inside—has a need to be creative and show their creativity," Vickie says.

Train station: Artist Kathy Thiessen also has combined several types of talent under one roof—an old train station.

Involvement in studio art—she has a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Saskatchewan—as well as music gave her a multidisciplinary perspective on the arts. "I was dreaming about a central location where people could hang their art and do concerts."

She used to walk by Rosthern's rundown, empty railway station and think about the possibilities. One day she got the key and went in to take a look.

Soon others began dreaming with her, and in 1990—after much public relations work, proposals to the town, the formation of a cooperative and much work on the building—Station Arts Centre opened with a tearoom, art gallery, craft shop and small concert and theater hall. The space is also used for art and dance classes.

That first year, Thiessen was named Rosthern's Citizen of the Year. She has received numerous awards and accolades since.

The center hosts about five concerts a year, with musicians coming from Saskatchewan and other parts of Canada to perform a variety of music, from country and folk to classical. The gallery strikes a balance between regional and national artists, with an occasional international show. Summer play productions usually focus on

Menno Fieguth

"Everybody—somewhere inside—has a need to be creative and show their creativity."

Vickie Dyck

rural themes.

The integration of art forms reflects Kathy's integration of her talents and faith.

"To me art is life," she says. "I don't separate one from another—as a Christian, as an artist, as a Mennonite.

"I always feel that art is food for the soul."

Debra Fieguth is associate editor of ChristianWeek, *from which this article was reprinted (March 15, 1994).*

"To me art is life. I don't separate one from another—as a Christian, as an artist, as a Mennonite."

Kathy Thiessen

Menno Fieguth

FAME AND GLORY

Mary Kennan Herbert

a numb surprise
finding myself here
ordering lunch

at a deli in Hell
not knowing what to buy
or eat or feel

for years I ruled the world
money and handshakes
lots of telephone calls

mine mine mine
now I work hard for a
different kind of living

thine thine thine
still cannot believe
the change of venue

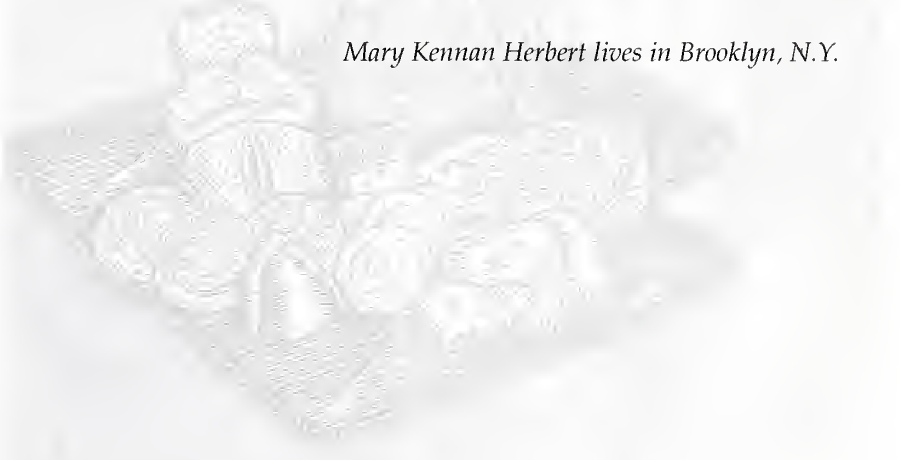
not a boss anymore
nor even a bossess
now living on your largesse

coffee to go and these
tuna sandwiches and chum
I eat lots

grateful for whatever
and stare down at my hands
fingers that typed letters

to the rich and famous
and now look
they are old and small

Mary Kennan Herbert lives in Brooklyn, N.Y.



MUSIC FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

Three Saskatchewan artists have helped make music an enjoyable part of worship.

Debra Fieguth

Duff Warkentin has conducted several choirs, including the Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College (RJC) chorale and the Saskatchewan Valley singers. He now co-directs the Saskatoon Chamber Choir.

Duff grew up primarily in Saskatoon but attended RJC, where "it was terribly exciting" as a teenager to sing in the school choir, he says. His grandparents came from Russia with a few basic belongings, plus a Bible and a hymnbook.

"Of all the arts, choral singing has been accepted by the Mennonite church," he says, because "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts." In a choir, where voices blend and none dominates, there is less danger of pride, he explains.

That background, Duff says, "is something we can offer the wider church from our heritage." On a local level that concept was put into practice through a joint choir with the Mennonite and Catholic churches for a special project one spring. The repertoire included music from a 16th-century mass.

A member of the Mennonite Fellowship of Rosthern, Duff, who has a master's degree in choral music, sees

Menno Fieguth

"There has to be enjoyment, and we have to sing for the right reasons."

Duff Warkentin

Menno Fieguth

"When I play the organ, so often I'm singing the words in my mind, so it has a lot of meaning."

Dora Bergen

"If you can transfer your own love and excitement for this avenue of expression [to your children], then they've got to catch the spirit."

Louella Friesen

Menno Fieguth

the need for good music at three levels: the choir, the congregation and the family.

In a congregation, he says, "there has to be enjoyment, and we have to sing for the right reasons." But congregational singing is also "something we have to work at consciously."

Two small sons have given Duff a perspective on music within the family. "I would love to see parents singing with their children," he says, describing singing as a way to pass on not only a musical heritage but a faith heritage. "When our extended family gets together, we sing."

Transfer your love: About 25 kilometers west on a pig farm near Waldheim, Sask., Louella Friesen encourages the pursuit of music in her three young children. "They're singing all the time," she says. "If you can transfer your own love and excitement for this avenue of expression, then they've got to catch the spirit."

Louella, who has a degree in church music and a bachelor of music from the University of Saskatchewan, finds several ways of participating in musical events despite her busy family life. Music for a choral mass sits on the dishwasher, where she can pick it up and rehearse while doing housework. She teaches private voice lessons as well as through RJC, has conducted the senior choir at Zoar Mennonite Church in Waldheim for more than 10 years, and has led the church's children's choir. She does some solo recital work and is a member of the Saskatoon Chamber Singers.

A real blessing: Dora (Klaassen) Bergen played piano and organ at the rural Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church near Laird, Sask., for 50 years. Though small, the church supports three choirs: one adult, one for school-age children and another for preschoolers.

Back in the 1930s her mother encouraged Dora to take piano lessons because she was bored, she says. Despite the financial hardships of that time, young Dora rode with the cream truck to Rosthern each week for her lessons. She eventually earned her diploma.

Over the years she accompanied church choirs and taught piano lessons to more young people than she can keep track of. Some years ago she reduced her load from about 20 to seven students, and last spring held a retirement recital featuring her students and other musicians.

Though Dora plays less at church, allowing younger musicians to play more often, music is still integral to her life and an important part of worship. "When I play the organ, so often I'm singing the words in my mind, so it has a lot of meaning," she says.

"It's been a real blessing to me."

Debra Fieguth is associate editor of ChristianWeek, *from which this article was reprinted (March 15, 1994).*

Al Reimer
MY HARP IS TURNED TO MOURNING

A *reader's guide to* Mennonite literature

INTERPRETERS OF LIFE AND TRUTH

Ervin Beck

Since 1962, when Rudy Wiebe published his first novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, the body of literature—especially fiction and poetry—written by Mennonites about Mennonite experience has increased dramatically, both in quantity and quality. This literature is so good that it is probably more known and admired outside the Mennonite community than within it.

Assuming that many Mennonite readers have catching up to do in this area, I offer a survey of literature by Canadian and U.S. writers. I call attention to books that are "good reads," and I survey a wide range of writers and literary expressions.

Swiss Mennonite experience in fiction: An excellent place to start is Jeff Gundy's recent book of creative nonfiction, *A Community of Memory: My Days with George and Clara* (University of Illinois Press, 1996), which follows the immigration of Hessian and Alsatian Amish to Illinois through Butler County, Ohio, and their evolution into the Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite churches of Illinois. Told through the voices of eight ancestors of the author, the story culminates in the autobiographies of the author's grandparents, George and Clara Strubhar Gundy. Throughout, Gundy interrupts his story by making provocative personal comments on it. For the secular reader, the book offers Amish-Mennonite community as an attractive option for these relativistic times; for the Mennonite reader, the book questions that community's regard for artists who work within it.

I Hear the REAPER'S SONG
Sara
SLEEPING PREACHER
Julia Kasdorf

Two very different novels depict the Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pa. Sara Stambaugh's *I Hear the Reaper's Song* (Good Books, 1984) recreates a turning point in the history of Lancaster County Mennonites in 1896. A tragic accident leads to a fervent religious revival and adoption of the plain costume and other rigid rules advocated by visiting ministers from the Midwest. Set in the '60s, Janet Kauffman's *Collaborators* (Gray Wolf, 1986) traces the bizarre relationship of Andrea Doria and her plain Mennonite mother who, in effect, pushes her daughter to leave the Mennonite community and become like her mother's scholar friend.

Although Rosemary Deckert Nixon depicts the Old Mennonite community of "Wadden," Saskatchewan, in her book of linked short stories, *Mostly Country* (NeWest, 1991), the people and their personal, social and religious struggles also match those of Old Mennonites living in the United States.

Omar Eby writes about American missionaries to Africa in his novel *A Long Dry Season* (Good Books, 1988). But in place of the heroes of the faith and the heart-warming conversion experiences of typical missionary literature, here we find people like us, struggling to retain their Christian motivation while they also try to love each other and Africa and its people. Better than any annual mission office report, this novel shows what life on the mission field must be like for more missionaries than we may want to think. Rosemary Nixon's recent book of short stories, *The Cock's Egg* (NeWest, 1994), shows Christian service workers in Africa in an equally honest, provocative way.

Russian Mennonite experience in fiction: Russian Mennonite writers—especially Canadian—have written more and finer fiction than have their Swiss Mennonite counterparts. One of the best ways for "Old Mennonites" to move toward the integration of the two traditions may be to read fiction about Russian Mennonite experience, historical and contemporary.

Al Reimer's *My Harp Is Turned to Mourning* (Hyperion, 1985) is the perfect place to begin, since it is a readable and convincing account of Russian Mennonites' experience, beginning in the Ukraine in 1805 and moving through their immigration to western Canada. The main characters are an artist and a preacher, both of whose Mennonite commitments are tested during the turmoil associated with the anarchist Makhno. Reading Reimer's straightforward account prepares one to understand Rudy Wiebe's artistically more complex novel about the same experience, *The Blue Mountains of China* (McClellan and Stewart, 1970), which may be the best novel ever written by a Mennonite.

The most recently published historical novel about Russian Mennonites, *Our Asian Journey* (mir editions, 1997) by Dallas Wiebe, tries to capture the spiritual yearning and horrible experiences of the Mennonites who left the Ukraine in 1879 and followed the charismatic leader Claas Epp Jr. to eastern Asia to await the Second Coming. The story is told mainly through the diary and memoirs of Joseph B. Toews, one of the pilgrims who eventually settles in the western United States, although not to his heart's ease.

Two very different novels portray life in the close-knit Russian Mennonite communities that developed in western Canada. In Rudy Wiebe's *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (McClellan and Stewart, 1962) the disciplined community of "Wapiti," headed by Deacon Block, gradually disintegrates, thanks to both external influences such as secular education and World War II and the moral failings of members of the community. But in the fictional "Gutenthal" of Armin Wiebe's book of short stories, *The Salvation of Yasch Siemens* (Turnstone, 1984), we see the same kind of community depicted in a satiric yet sympathetic manner. Yasch Siemens, a real "downix," lives on the margins of the community's economy and religious life. He presents his earthy, bumbling experiences and ideas in a Plattdeutsch-influenced English that makes this one of the funniest books I have ever read.

The short stories of Sandra Birdsell's *Night Travellers* (General Publishing, 1972) show the western Canadian Mennonite community coming apart in the course of the marriage of Mika to her Metis Indian husband Maurice in the town of "Agassis" on the Red River in Manitoba. Mika's immigrant Mennonite parents die, bickering over watermelon pickle and cigarettes. Mika keeps in touch with her prayer group but is no longer a faithful Mennonite. Her daughters' lives move even further into acculturation and disintegration.

The lives of more successful, acculturated, urban, educated Canadian Mennonites—"Muppies"—are brilliantly outlined by Rudy Wiebe in his novel *My Lovely Enemy* (McClellan and Stewart, 1983) and by David Bergen in his book of short stories, *Sitting Opposite My Brother* (Turnstone, 1993), and his recent novel, *A Year of Lesser* (Phyllis Bruce, 1996). Because Wiebe uses "magical realism" and portrays unconventional behavior, *My Lovely Enemy* may appeal most to readers with a caviar taste in literature. I recommend reading Wiebe after reading Bergen, who shows fallen yet spiritually questing Mennonites in a more realistic, affective manner.

Poetry: Although few people read books of poetry cover to cover, I recommend two books by Mennonites that should interest and fascinate most Mennonite readers.

First is *Sleeping Preacher* (University of Pittsburgh, 1991) by Julia Kasdorf. Many of Kasdorf's poems deal with Amish, Beachy Amish and Mennonite experience in "Big Valley," near Belleville, Pa., where the speaker-author spent summers as a child. The sequence of poems then follows her marriage and life in New York City, where she embraces the broader world while still holding on to memories and values from her Amish-Mennonite past.

Three Mennonite Poets (Good Books, 1986) is a bargain, presenting generous selections from the early poetry of Jean Janzen, David Waltner-Toews and Yorifumi Yaguchi. Janzen, from Fresno, Calif., and Waltner-Toews, from Ontario, both celebrate everyday experience in sensuous images with transcendent implications. Yaguchi, a Mennonite pastor, poet and professor in Sapporo, Japan, sometimes writes in the restrained spiritual tradition of typical Japanese poetry, but he also disrupts that decorum with more Western and Christian images of human guilt and fear.

Other artful and insightful books of poetry have been published by Jeff Gundy, Juanita Brunk, Keith Ratzlaff, Sarah Klassen, Di Brandt and Patrick Friesen, among others.

The Mennonite writer's vision: You will notice that none of these books has been published by a denominational press—neither Herald Press nor Faith & Life Press. That does not necessarily indicate hostility to church by the writers or particular neglect of artists by church publishers.

The goal of these writers is not to write uplifting, orthodox depictions of life, although I see a spiritual center in all of them. Rather, the literary artist's task is to create a world of images and ideas true to one's own experience, insight and inspiration. They remind us of the diversity of gifts in the church that Paul celebrated in Romans 12:4-8. In one sense Mennonite poets and novelists are interpreters of life and truth. Or perhaps they are speakers in tongues, for whom we readers need to become the interpreters.

We need them to keep us from becoming culturally insular and spiritually complacent. And they need us as a supporting community in which more creative art can be grounded.

A final note: It is difficult to obtain Canadian books in the United States. The best way is to call Heaven (yes, Heaven) Bookstore in Winnipeg at (204) 452-6400. Manager Tim Brandt will fill your order cheerfully and quickly—and will even suggest the next Canadian Mennonite book for you to read.

Ervin Beck is professor and chair of English at Goshen (Ind.) College, where he teaches Mennonite literature, chairs the Mennonite-Amish Museum Committee and is coordinating plans for the Oct. 23-26 conference Mennonite/s Writing in the U.S. This article is also appearing in Gospel Herald.

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The literary artist's task is to create a world of images and ideas true to one's own experience, insight and inspiration.

Letters

ANTI-SEMITISM IS REAL

Yes, Dora, there is anti-Semitism among Mennonites in Canada and in Nebraska, Oklahoma, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio. (See "Mennonite Anti-Semitism," by Dora Dueck, July 22 issue, page 9.) And the Mennonites in Latin America have been accused of helping the infamous Dr. Mengele and other Nazis while they were running away from retaliation. I have felt anti-Semitism and heard it when I attended or gave my testimony in Mennonite congregations all over the United States.

I am a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, a survivor of the Holocaust. I know first-hand what discrimination and persecution are. I have become a Christian, a Mennonite, because of the powerful testimony of Mennonite Central Committee relief workers in France, and I have never regretted this life-changing commitment I made 56 years ago. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ and have never made a secret of my faith in Jesus, even in the presence of my Jewish friends and family, who have all been victims of anti-Semitism.

But I also realize that Mennonites (and other Christians) are not perfect, sometimes ignorant and prejudiced against people who are "different." "We" are peculiar, "they" are different, and different means undesirable.

Another factor in this feeling of anti-Semitism among some Mennonites is their admiration for anything German. God spoke German, they say, because the Bible quotes the Creator, "Adam, wo bist du?" You may also know that during World War II some Mennonites sympathized with the Nazis.

But the heart of Christ's teaching is forgiveness, and we need to forgive people who are small-minded and help them see that there is a greater, more loving way of treating others. We need to cease looking back in anger and learn to look forward in love. Forgive even if you can't forget.

I congratulate *The Mennonite* for publishing an article such as the one by Dora Dueck, and I welcome the subsequent letters to the editor. Since 1961 my husband and I have lived in southeast Texas, where Mennonites are not known and where prejudice is rampant. We made it clear that we were Mennonites, even when we became members of other mainline churches. Our subscription to *The Mennonite* has never lapsed. We have enjoyed reading many of the uplifting and thought-provoking articles. I continue to share our denominational publication proudly with the pastor of the Disciples of Christ church of which I am a member. He finds inspiration, spiritual growth and constructive controversy in our magazine.

I pray *The Mennonite* will always build on the foundation that is Jesus Christ. I pray that our church publication will continue to teach forgiveness and that *The Mennonite* will continue to make the comfortable feel uncomfortable. *Beatrice R. Buller, Beaumont, Texas*

OFF DEATH ROW FOR NOW

I want to thank you and everyone who prayed for me. Those prayers got me a new trial and off death row for now and hopefully for good. The battle still goes on so keep the prayers going. I know my troubles are small compared to others', but I sure need help. Thank you. *Bobby Steverson, Polk County Jail, Bartow, Fla.*

SABBATH INCLUDES DOING

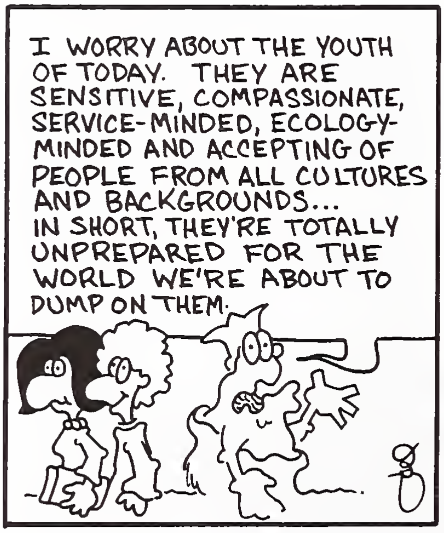
I appreciated the call to keep the Sabbath (Aug. 26 issue). You hit the nail on the head with regard to our need for it, the commandment to keep it and the losses we have suffered as we deflected away from it. However, I wonder if you may have missed the point of this life-giving commandment in saying, "Do nothing."

Is it really God's command to do nothing, or is the commandment to keep the day "set apart" and wholly unique from all other days, to reflect the utterly incomparable uniqueness (holiness) of God? The expanded instructions indicate that on this day we are to do things other than our usual work.

You make a good point when you say that God's love is "for us in spite of our deeds." It is precisely through the knowledge of God's unconditional choice/desire/commitment to love us, that we have the best evidence of our being something. The Bible says, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." But we must add Jesus' statement that "no one loves as much as the one who willingingly gives up life so a friend can live."

God's command to keep the Sabbath truly is for our good and for the good of the world. *Clare Neufeld, Delta, B.C.*

Pontius' Puddle


I WORRY ABOUT THE YOUTH OF TODAY. THEY ARE SENSITIVE, COMPASSIONATE, SERVICE-MINDED, ECOLOGY-MINDED AND ACCEPTING OF PEOPLE FROM ALL CULTURES AND BACKGROUNDS... IN SHORT, THEY'RE TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR THE WORLD WE'RE ABOUT TO DUMP ON THEM.

VALUABLE RESOURCE

Thank you for producing a valuable resource to the Mennonite church. As I've grown older (I'm a college senior this fall), I've come to appreciate your magazine both as an encouragement and a challenge to my faith walk, as well as an alternative news source. *Ryan Beiler, Canadensis, Pa.*

APPLAUDS BETHEL PRESIDENT

I am writing to commend President Doug Penner of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. This year he has faced a very difficult situation, one that no college president wants to face—the loss of trust and the loss of funds in the controller's office (Aug. 12 issue, page 15). We at Goshen College are saddened by this news. President Penner has shown dignity, grace and Christian compassion. I am especially moved by his desire to learn and help others learn from the experience, and to show prayerful compassion to the former administrator.

We hope that the many friends of Bethel College will offer both prayers and financial support. *Shirley H. Showalter, President, Goshen (Ind.) College*

News

Burglar hits MVS unit house in Tucson

Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC/MBM)—Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) workers in Tucson, Ariz., Dennis and Alice Huxman, along with their four children, now can identify with the sense of violation others in their neighborhood have experienced after their unit house was robbed Sept. 4.

"When I pulled into the carport, I saw the bathroom curtains blowing outside the house," Alice says. "At first I wondered if Dennis had forgotten his keys or something and had to get in that way. But I soon realized that that wasn't the case."

Not knowing if the burglar was still in the house, Alice told her children to remain in the van while she went to check in the house. The front door was open, and a cursory check of the home made it clear that the thief was gone.

Aside from the mess made by the burglar—who went through drawers of clothing, beds and other personal items, trying to find valuables—items stolen included: an electronic keyboard on which the children were taking piano lessons; a small boom box stereo; a computer used by the children for their home schooling projects; the MVS unit computer, used by Alice as the local program coordinator; Dennis and Alice's wedding rings; a guitar, which the Huxmans' daughter, Rebecca, was learning to play; a bicycle that had been bought by the Tucson MVS unit for the children.

The bicycle was a special gift from the other MVSers in Tucson to the Huxmans. The MVSers chose to save their monthly allotment of money for educational or recreational activities for a number of months to buy it.

Although she is thankful that no one was injured and only things were lost in the burglary, Alice says that her family still feels violated.

"It felt like I needed the whole house to be washed out," she says.

A police report was filed, and several partial fingerprints lifted from the broken bathroom screen. But there is little hope of finding the thief, unless the burglar has a prior record and fingerprints already on file with the police department.

Immediately following the burglary, Alice says, the children had mixed reactions. Her oldest son, 12-year-old J.D., said that he believed the burglary was a sign from God that they were supposed to leave Tucson and move back to Kansas. But 11-year-old Daniel disagreed with his older brother.

"Daniel said he believed that God allows things to happen to us to strengthen our faith," Alice says. "Now that we have had some time to think about it, we pretty much agree that Daniel was right."

The Huxmans did not have insurance. The MVS computer had been donated; other items like the wedding rings are irreplaceable.

"Even if they had been insured and we had a lot of money to go out and buy new rings, I probably wouldn't do it," she says. "I'd rather go out to pawn shops and look for my own, because it just wouldn't be the same to buy a new one."

> ***"Daniel said he believed that God allows things to happen to us to strengthen our faith. Now that we have had some time to think about it, we pretty much agree that Daniel was right."***
>
> ***Alice Huxman***

Life for the Huxmans has not changed significantly. They now have a security lock on the front door of their house, and they lock all the windows whenever the leave, no matter how hot it is outside. Perhaps the greatest loss for the family is the loss of innocence.

"This has been a VS house for a long time," Alice says. "How can a person come in and look at the things that are here—children's drawings all over the place, less-than-spectacular furniture, antiquated computers—and not say, 'Oh, I can't do this to them'?" *Christy Risser*

Inside the news

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The Violent and Repeat Juvenile Offender Act of 1997 (S.10) proposes to incarcerate teenagers convicted of crimes such as shoplifting or curfew violation with hardened adult criminals. The bill also repeals funding for violence prevention programs for juveniles. Contact your U.S. senator at (202) 224-3121. (*Peace and Social Justice Center Newsletter*)

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The (U.S.) Peace Tax Fund bill has been shortened and is now called the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill. Marian Franz, director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, says the name change makes the point that opposition to war taxes is a "belief, not an opinion." The revised bill doesn't say where war taxes should be diverted, only that the money should not go to the military. (*Gospel Herald*)

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"Gathering Seed from a Medieval Mother Root" is the theme for World Community Day, Nov. 7. This year's worship service, sponsored by Church Women United, focuses on the work and writings of medieval women mystics such as Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Hildegard of Bingen and more. For materials and information, contact Church Women United, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 500, New York, NY 10115; 1-800-CWU-5551.

Gospel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., voted in April to withdraw from both the Northern District Conference and the General Conference Mennonite Church, effective Oct. 31. The congregation withdrew, it said, because its views differed from the conferences' on homosexuality, liberal teaching and diversity.

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Giving to Bluffton (Ohio) College last year was more than 6 percent over the previous year. Total giving for the fiscal year, ending June 30, was $2.5 million. Foundations and business contributed 41 percent of the total. Bluffton's Second Century Campaign has received $10.3 million in cash and pledges. The campaign is entering its fifth and final year. A remaining goal is the completion of a $7.5 million fund for a new academic center; gifts and pledges to this fund currently total $2.9 million.

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On Aug. 18, an 11-member Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Chiapas, Mexico, held a prayer vigil in San Cristobal to call attention to the violent displacement of thousands of indigenous men, women and children from their communities by the paramilitary group "Paz y Justicia" (Peace and Justice). The CPT delegation traveled to Salto De Agua in northern Chiapas and met with refugees from five communities. People from Salto De Agua reported they had received repeated harassment from Paz y Justicia over the past several months, including threats to kill their children. Villagers from other communities have been killed, raped and beaten by this paramilitary group. When truckloads of Paz y Justicia members armed with automatic weapons entered villages on Aug. 9, the villagers fled without any belongings. Paz y Justicia captured and are detaining three men from one village. The villagers fear violent repercussions if they return to their village. (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

MCC India staff remember Mother Teresa

Calcutta (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee India staff were among the thousands who stood in line in the bright sunshine Sept. 10 to pay final respects to Mother Teresa, who died here Sept. 5 of a heart attack at age 87.

MCC India and Mother Teresa shared a bond that dates back to the '50s. Mother Teresa admired the Mennonites for their work in relief and development, for their readiness to give her material resources such as milk, soap, clothing, blankets and medication for leprosy and tuberculosis when her supplies were depleted, and for their peace witness. MCC staff admired "Mother" for her compassion, her blindness to caste or creed and her ability to see Christ in every person.

Howard Zehr

Christ in all people: *Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who died Sept. 5, is pictured here with John A. Lapp, former executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, at the celebration of 50 years of MCC in India in November 1992.*

On Sept. 10, when the staff returned from St. Thomas Church, where Mother Teresa's body lay in state, they shared with each other their favorite memories of her.

Julius Devadason, forestry projects officer, recalled Mother's willingness to write letters of recommendation for MCC that expedited getting material resource shipments past customs officials. A letter from Mother swayed even the most recalcitrant officials and saved MCC thousands of dollars in import duty.

Donald Kessop, manager of the MCC Global Family Program in India, remembered Mother Teresa's willingness to meet and talk with visitors. She typically asked visitors if they had seen her work and told them that it was more important to see than she was. Kessop recalled that Mother frequently quoted from Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you have done to the least of these thy brethren, you have done it unto me." He told of the day when she came to the MCC office to conduct morning devotions for the staff.

Cynthia Peacock, projects coordinator, spoke of the time that an MCC director discussed with Mother Teresa his concern that her approach of providing food and shelter perpetuated the dependency of the poor and did not do anything to eradicate root causes of poverty. Mother calmly and nondefensively responded that she believed that there was a need for her way of working and a need for the kind of work MCC did. She considered both approaches valid.

Juliana Chaudhuri, women's projects officer, remembered Mother Teresa as having a delightful sense of humor. When handing out her business card, she enjoyed saying that she was "a business person"—she was in

God's business.

Chaudhuri also remembered Mother Teresa as a spontaneous person who did not write project proposals requesting aid but simply asked for help in a convincing way and people responded. MCC never required her to submit a report for how she utilized resources given her. Mother Teresa's integrity was such that there was never any concern about misuse of resources.

A favorite memory for Margaret Devadason, who is retiring this fall after 33 years of MCC service, was of Mother Teresa's participation in the MCC India 50th anniversary celebration in November 1992. "It was my privilege to garland her," said Devadason. Mother Teresa had also planned to join the opening worship at Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta this past January but was unable to do so because of illness.

MCC India staff agreed it had been a unique pleasure, privilege and inspiration to interact with Mother Teresa and to support her work and that her successor, Sister Nirmala, can count on MCC's continued support. *Fern Gerber, MCC India country representative*

COMMENTARY

Touched by Mother Teresa

Worthington, Ohio—The get-well card from Mother Teresa arrived along with many others.

I was in a Calcutta hospital recovering from a heart attack. The postcard-sized card had a hole in the top as if it had been thumb-tacked to the wall. On the front was a picture of Jesus carrying a lamb and followed by other sheep. Written over the lamb Jesus was carrying was the word "you." On the reverse side, Mother Teresa had written, "Be the little lamb in the arms of Jesus who loves you. I will pray for you to get well. God bless you."

In the many times I met Mother Teresa, I was always aware that her daily activities were world news. Yet despite her responsibilities as the leader of a worldwide organization, she had time to wish me well. When I received the card, I recalled that when asked how she had managed to help so many people, she had replied, "One at a time." I had become one of those touched by Mother Teresa.

When I was director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) India from 1990 to 1996, our paths crossed on a fairly regular basis. I particularly recall visiting her after the religious riots in December 1992. During the week-long riots, the army was on the streets with orders to shoot on sight. Mother Teresa and her driver were among the few who ventured out.

She told me later with some amusement how she was waved through the army checkpoints when her face was recognized. Her widely circulated prayer for peace was credited with reducing violence and helping bring an end to the conflict.

These actions characterized Mother Teresa for me. When talking to her, one quickly became aware of her single-minded pursuit of causes for the right and in favor of the poor. She was fearless in this pursuit and willing to take on the high and mighty of the world. Her compassion seemed to have no limits. A phrase she frequently quoted was "to the glory of God and the good of man." She was a friend of MCC and honored us by her presence as chief guest at the 1992 celebration of MCC's 50 years in India.

More than 50 years ago, Mother Teresa left the cloistered walls of the convent and a comfortable teaching position to enter the busy, crowded streets of Calcutta. She told us a story of the generosity of the poor. In the early days of her ministry, she was teaching a group of students under a shade tree with the dust on the ground as her blackboard and a stick as her chalk. She saw that one boy looked sick. When she questioned him, he said he hadn't had anything to eat for three days. Mother Teresa got some rice and took it to the family. The boy's mother immediately divided the rice into two portions to give half to her neighbor whose family hadn't eaten for four days.

The stooped figure of Mother Teresa will remain a symbol of compassion for the "poorest of the poor" and of hope for those in despair. She accepted poverty and deprivation without noticing because her passion and attention was directed to helping the needy about her.

The sisters of the Missionaries of Charity around the world will carry on the work of Mother Teresa. We can best honor her by also taking up the work of making life better for the poor and needy. *Glen Miller*

"Envisioning a World Without Violence: Organizing the Religious Community Against the Death Penalty" is a national conference sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, Nov. 13-16 in Chevy Chase, Md. Featured speakers will include Sr. Helen Prejean, Bernice Albertine King and Millard Fuller. For information contact AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102-1479; (215) 241-7124; (fax) 215-241-7119.

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Guatemala's president, Alvaro Arzu, received hundreds of e-mail messages demanding an investigation into the shooting of street children by Guatemala's private police. Casa Alianza, an organization that provides rehabilitation services to street children in Guatemala, Mexico and Honduras, has developed an unconventional weapon in its fight against human rights abuses. After all local efforts have failed to get an investigation of violence against street children, Casa Alianza launches an "internet attack." Casa Alianza has a Rapid Response List on its home page. A few hours after sending out an e-mail message about one case, responses started flooding in to President Arzu's e-mail address, with copies to his ministers, embassies and media around the globe. "You can't open your e-mail and see more than 300 messages at any one time and not be shocked," says Bruce Harris, Casa Alianza's regional director of Latin American programs. "The authorities start to read these messages and understand the awful image they will have in foreign countries if they don't at least look into the accusa-tions. So, they immediately order an investigation. ... We have to use any mechanism we can—including the internet—to try to stop this institutionalized violence against street children." The Casa Alianza home page address is www.casa-alianza.org.

The Games Project, an effort of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and Christian Peacemaker Teams, will develop a web site to give information and rate the level of violence in computer video games. The project will also collect information on sexism, sexual explicitness and portrayal of minorities, as well as level of fun, challenge and cooperation. People are invited to suggest games to be reviewed or submit evaluations of games. The Games Project is also developing a Sunday school curriculum outline for junior youth about computer entertainment. Contact the Games Project at www.sentex.net/~games or MCC Ontario at 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1; (519) 745-8458. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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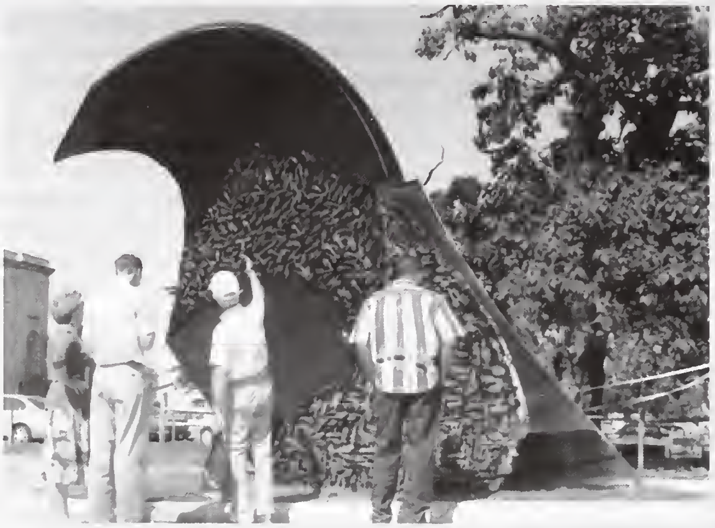
An American project manager of a U.S. Agency for International Development-sponsored road building project in Hebron was arrested Sept. 3, reports the *Chicago Tribune*. The American, "M," was arrested as he attempted to defend Palestinian project employees who were attacked by Israeli settlers under protection of the Israeli Defense Force. The project is designed to reopen the street to Palestinian traffic for the first time in three years. The project's scheduled completion date had been July 15, but the recent closures and continued harassment by settlers and soldiers—meticulously documented by M's team—has delayed the project, at U.S. taxpayer's expense. Harassment from Israeli settlers and soldiers has been constant. "I've been to the police station eight times to file complaints," says M. He had to go to the police in order to retrieve about 100 sidewalk paving bricks stolen by soldiers from the nearby military camp. Earlier, an Israeli soldier beat one of M's workers. The military has denied the beating incident. Windows of heavy machinery were smashed when settlers shot at them using compressed-air pellet guns. One loader had no window glass, and the driver, shot in the head, suffered a serious concussion. (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

The art of peacemaking


Dale Gehman/Gehman Photo Illustrations

Washington has a reputation for being a city of violence. But three years ago, the Metropolitan Police Department's gun exchange for money program, funded by boxer Riddick Bowe, yielded 3,500 guns.

When Michael Augsburger and his mother, Esther, both artists/sculptors, saw a TV news report indicating that the guns would be melted down to make fence posts, Michael said, "Those guns should be kept as guns and made into a symbol of the peace that can come when we lay down our weapons of violence."

On Sept. 19, the fruition of Michael and Esther's vision, "Guns into Plowshares," was dedicated at Judiciary Square in Washington. The 4-ton sculpture is made of steel in the shape of a plowshare and has about 3,000 incapacitated guns welded to much of its surface.

Guests at the dedication included Cora Masters Barry, representing her husband, Mayor Marion Barry.

"We want this sculpture to help bear the pain of those who lost loved ones by gun violence," Esther said. "To give this sculpture of peace to the city of Washington, our nation's capital, and to the world, comes from our hearts as an expression of faith and hope." ***Dale D. Gehman***

Retirement means faster pace for pair

Winnipeg (GCMC/MBM)—Like that ubiquitous battery-powered bunny, Henry and Helen Dueck just keep going and going.

Between 1960 and the present, the Duecks have served both long- and short-term mission assignments in Latin America: Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Mexico, mostly associated with the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church.

Both teachers, Henry (from Coaldale, Alta.) and Helen (Herbert, Sask.) have also in that time managed to raise five children, study at and earn degrees from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary, pastor Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and serve as missionaries-in-residence at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.

They first "tried to retire" in 1989, they say. During their missionary-in-residence year, Henry says, "we taught, itinerated and argued with the mission boards," who had barely let them land in Canada before trying to coax them back for short-term teaching assignments in six possible locations in South America.

"When we were younger, we were very innocent," says Helen, "and we'd say to the mission agency, 'You know our gifts; you place us.' By [1990], we were a little bit smarter and more careful about what we chose to do."

They ended up teaching (Helen in ethics, New Testament and Christian education, Henry in Old Testament) for two years at a Baptist-related seminary in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

In 1992, they "officially retired," when Henry turned 65. "But we were not even home—we were still packing [to go back to Herbert] when Glendon [Klaassen, then COM secretary for Latin America] asked if we'd consider another assignment," Henry says.

"Five countries in eight months, teaching, leading seminars and leadership retreats, visiting mission workers and churches, conducting Sunday school workshops—and then, if possible, stopping in Miami to visit Spanish-speaking churches there."

The Duecks said yes.

"I counted—we were in 33 different churches and slept in 35 different beds," says Helen.

That assignment ended in the spring of 1994. They tried to settle down in Herbert, but before the year was out, Klaassen, knowing they spoke Low German, asked if they'd go to Mexico for several months to work with Old Colony Mennonites there.

"Glendon told us, 'You can retire, relax, teach a few courses,'" says Henry.

Everyone liked that experience so well that the Duecks went back to Mexico from September 1995 to May 1996, and only recently returned from another stint in South America.

Their roles as expatriate church workers have changed over the course of the past 37 years, says Helen. "What we do now is 'leadership training,' where we walk alongside national church leaders. We are no longer the program builders, but we're supporting things that national leaders are building themselves. It's a fulfilling ministry. It's a great change to no longer be the trailblazers but instead be the support people."

As another illustration of the maturity of the church and mission work in South America, Henry cites the Mennonite Central Committee Bolivia annual retreat. "We led workshops for that in 1986, all in English," says Henry. "They asked us back in 1993, and we did everything in Spanish [because so many MCC Bolivia staff are now Bolivian nationals]."

The Duecks' most recent assignment—in Colombia, Uruguay and Bolivia—followed a trip to India for Mennonite World Conference. "[The churches in South America] want some formal teaching, but more than ever they're asking us to spend time with the leaders," says Henry.

"One young man told us, 'We don't need career missionaries, but someone who'll come around periodically and listen to us—give advice and suggestions about problems we have,'" says Helen. "We spent a lot of time listening, being present."

She tells another story. "We were visiting a little tribal church in Bolivia. The man who'd been appointed the new leader said he had no idea how to do this; could [we] tell him how to organize a church? With a little bit of guidance, that group formed what was for them a workable structure. We needed only to help them organize the ideas they already had.

"It's tiring, because you don't come in with a plan, but it's challenging and rewarding to see them work from their own base."

Helen turned 65 this year, but the Duecks seem to have no plans for staying quietly at home in Herbert. Henry is making a video on Mennonite immigrants to Uruguay (the 50-year anniversary of the first arrivals of Danzig [Prussian] Mennonites there is in October 1998). Helen will coordinate formation of a Spanish-language Christian education curriculum for the Latin American Mennonite churches.

"You don't sit in Canada and write a curriculum for Latin America," she says. "It will mean guiding some workshops to help people develop it themselves. I've already worked with two women in Uruguay on a teacher's guide for one unit, as a sample."

Dave Linscheid

Henry and Helen Dueck

Their children and "12-going-on-13" grandchildren are scattered across Canada, from Vancouver to Montreal. "We'd settle in Central or South America if it weren't for that," says Helen. "Herbert is pretty quiet."
Melanie A. Zuercher

Comunidad de Esperanza Mennonite Church, Dallas, Texas, received a $20,000 Tenth Man church building grant Sept. 7 from Mennonite Men. George and Margaret Ediger helped begin the work at Comunidad de Esperanza in 1988. Damian Rodriguez is pastor.

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"Leading God's People," a pastoral studies distance education course offered by Conrad Grebel College, will begin Nov. 3. The course, for pastoral and lay leaders, is sponsored by the Theological and Pastoral Education Council of the Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite churches. For information contact Catherine Hunsberger, PSDE registrar, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6; (519) 885-0220, ext. 232; (fax) 519-885-0014.

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Children at the New Meadow Run Bruderhof in Farmington, Pa., staged a "Children's Crusade to Death Row" march in opposition to the death penalty Aug. 18-20. An inspiration for the march was the children's correspondence with death-row inmates. Earlier this summer, Bruderhof children staged an anti-death penalty protest on behalf of Reginald Lewis, a prisoner with whom they corresponded. He was to be executed July 15 but received a stay of execution. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Kenyan paramilitary police stormed the All Saints Anglican Cathedral in Nairobi during a pro-reform rally on July 7, reports ENI and other news sources. The police threw tear gas into the cathedral, then attacked pro-reform advocates inside. Rally organizer Timothy Njoya, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, was seriously injured with a head wound. The cathedral was splattered with blood, and pews were broken and scattered. (*ChristianWeek*)

Organizers of last January's Mennonite World Conference sessions in Calcutta had to accept "protection" by local police, the Secret Service and by the Ministry of the Interior, says MWC executive secretary Larry Miller. Miller told the security agencies that the MWC group held pacifist, nonviolent convictions; many participants would not wish to be protected by guns. The authorities agreed to leave their arms in a small office at an entrance to the campus. Some unarmed plainclothes agents circulated on campus; many of them attended worship services and the Global Church Village. Miller says, "In the end, I told myself that it was a good thing to have them among us." (*Courier*)

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On Sept. 17, the U.S. negotiating team in Oslo, Norway, withdrew its proposal for exceptions to the comprehensive treaty to ban antipersonnel landmines. The United States tried to shape the treaty to fit current U.S. landmines policy by seeking delays for implementing the treaty, exemptions to continue using landmines in the Korean peninsula and some forms of anti-personnel landmines in conjunction with anti-tank mines. But other countries refused to allow any exceptions to the ban. The treaty will be signed by some 100 countries in Ottawa in early December. The United States can still sign the treaty in Ottawa if it so chooses. Landmines claim a victim every 22 minutes—mostly civilians, often children. U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright told a gathering recently that landmines are the "Saturday night specials of modern warfare." On a visit to Angola she "saw children tethered to their houses so that they would not run away into fields where there were landmines." Contact members of the U.S. House of Representatives and ask them to support the Evans-Quinn Landmine Elimination Act (HR 2459). Passage of this bill will add pressure for the United States to go to Ottawa. Call the White House, (202) 456-1111, and urge the administration to sign the treaty. (*J. Daryl Byler, MCC Washington Office*)

Cattle project fosters colony cooperation

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Where John Peters goes, cattle are sure to follow.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Peters—who for 19 years directed the University of Saskatchewan's agriculture program—appreciates quality livestock. And no matter where he may go—Paraguay in the '60s or Bolivia in the '90s—cattle are probably close behind.

Mark Beach

The good cowherd? *Edna and John Peters, Saskatoon, Sask., are currently working with Mennonite Central Committee in Bolivia.*

In the late 1960s, Peters and his wife, Edna, served for five years with MCC in the Mennonite colonies of the Paraguayan Chaco. While they were there, MCC, through the Schowalter Foundation, provided $4,000 U.S. to Menno Colony for a beef cattle improvement project. John helped coordinate the initiative, which enabled the colony to buy breeding stock and install fencing.

Since then, Menno Colony cattle have thrived. The colony has won national championships with some of their animals, and colonists have significantly increased milk production.

Now, some 30 years later, John and Edna Peters are again with MCC—this time working with Mennonite colonists in Bolivia. While there, they've hosted Peter Klassen, a veterinarian from Paraguay's Menno Colony.

Klassen visited farms and discussed animal husbandry with 50 cattle owners in nine of the some 30 Bolivian colonies. And he hit upon an idea. Why not export some of the high-quality Paraguayan cattle into the Bolivian colonies?

Why not indeed? John was enthusiastic—and willing to help coordinate the endeavor.

On the hot, windy afternoon of June 20, two large trucks rolled into Santa Cruz, a city in eastern Bolivia and site of MCC Bolivia headquarters. The trucks carried 51 purebred animals and four Bolivian Mennonites who had accompanied the animals during their 58-hour trip from Paraguay.

The animals have since been distributed to 44 farms in 13 Bolivian colonies where, it's hoped, they will soon be improving the colonists' dairy and beef herds.

John notes other benefits as well. The project brought the farmers together in a cooperative effort, and it opened connections between Mennonite colonists in Bolivia and Paraguay.

Already other Bolivian farmers are asking whether they can participate in another such project. Any guesses as to who may help coordinate it? *Emily Will*

Youth hear war veterans' stories

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—"I remember hearing pilots laugh about dropping their unused 500-pound bombs on a man riding a bicycle. I became sick of war before I became a Christian."

Barry Loop, a former Navy radar technician, gave this chilling testimony to more than 150 attentive youth who participated in one of two "Ask a Vet" workshops at the Mennonite Church youth convention in Orlando, Fla., this summer. Loop now pastors Bahia Vista Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla.

"The overall attitude to the workshop was one of curiosity and engagement. Some [youth] were obviously drawn to the idea of military service and others were clearly against it," says Titus Peachey, the event's organizer. Peachey serves as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. staff associate for peace education.

The workshops aimed to provide an alternative view to military advertisements that tout the educational and career opportunities of military service while ignoring its central purpose—to learn how to kill. The veterans who spoke "were chosen for their commitment to a theology and lifestyle of peace," Peachey says.

"I was surprised by the number of youth who had already been in contact with military recruiters," Peachey says. "More than half the 110 young people in the first workshop said they had spoken to a recruiter.

"Although some youth are annoyed at being 'hounded' by recuiters, I believe military advertising works. It captures the imagination of many youth."

One young workshop participant noted that the two main speakers both indicated they had come from dysfunctional families. He asked whether their entry into the military might have been a search for belonging.

"For some youth, there are push factors in their home environment, in addition to the pull factors of military advertising, that draw them to the armed forces," says Peachey.

A second presenter, Richard Davis, formerly served as an Army chaplain. He now pastors Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas. Davis recounted his growing sense of conflict between his loyalty oath to the military and his loyalty to God.

"Increasingly, membership in the armed forces violated my first commitment to follow Christ," Davis says. "I had to make a choice."

A surprise panelist was Glen Guyton, an Air Force captain from Hampton, Va., whose application for conscientious objector status had just been submitted. Guyton attended the first workshop, then joined the veterans' panel in the second one.

Guyton, who has not been involved in combat, has nonetheless felt a growing conflict between his Christian beliefs and his membership in the armed forces.

"It is more and more difficult to operate effectively in an environment in which the focus is on using weapons of mass destruction to impose the political and economic will of our nation. … I will not kill someone for my wealth. Why would I for anyone else's?" Guyton asked the audience.

> ***"I will not kill someone for my wealth. Why would I for anyone else's?"***
>
> ***Glen Guyton***

Questions from the youth dealt with topics ranging from the vets' individual experiences to military support for education to the influence of faith on decisions about military service.

"The abundance of questions tells me the youth found the presentations interesting and thought-provoking," Peachey says.

MCC U.S. is producing a video chronicling the stories of several Mennonite military veterans. The video will feature veterans of several different wars.

North America assignment

Mim Book, associate general secretary for the Mennonite Church General Board, welcomes Larry Miller, center, and Wayne Mark Thomas to the General Board offices in Elkhart, Ind. Miller, Mennonite World Conference general secretary, is based in North America through July 1998, and the MC General Board will be providing MWC staff (Thomas, Larry Miller and Eleanor Miller) with office space during that time.

"Being in North America during the next year will allow MWC to reinforce its connections with member conferences on this continent," Miller says. He is available for speaking assignments while working in North America and can be reached through General Board at (219) 294-7131 or via e-mail at millerlarry@compuserve.com.

Translation can be a tricky business. In China, the first Chinese name for Coca-Cola, "Ke-Kou-Ke-La," meant "bite the wax tadpole" or "female horse stuffed with wax." The slogan for Kentucky Fried Chicken, "finger-lickin' good," became "eat your fingers off." General Motors' Chevy Nova became the "Caribe" after the company discovered "no va" in Spanish means "it won't go." (*COMmunicator*)

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Part of this year's freshman orientation at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., included a day for service in the Newton community. More than 210 students, administrators, faculty and staff from the college spent Sept. 2 in service at a variety of locations. Work sites included retirement centers and nursing homes, the city swimming pool, area museums, parks, the public library and service agencies. Bethel has 533 full-time students and 71 part-time students this year. (*June Krehbiel*)

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Participation in Service Adventure for 1997-98 has nearly doubled over the previous year. The short-term mission program, founded in 1989 by Mennonite Board of Missions and now fully integrated with the General Conference Mennonite Church, includes more young adults from Canadian, GC and non-Mennonite backgrounds than before. Service Adventure provides a 10 1/2-month term for young adults to build character, deepen understanding of spiritual truths and discover new ways to serve God in local communities. Participants live in a household with other young adults and serve as volunteers for community service organizations, work with children, senior citizens or people with disabilities, or provide repair or secretarial services. The volunteers can test possible career interests, participate in the life of a Mennonite congregation and engage in group study of the Bible, social issues and areas of personal growth under the guidance of a unit leader.

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan., a large, active congregation serving a rural community, seeks **full-time lead pastor** with a commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, passion for the gospel and vision for outreach. Experience in leadership/administration beneficial.

Applicants are invited to submit resume and request for information to **Karl Brubaker, Pastoral Search Team, P.O. Box 71, Goessel, KS 67053; (316) 327-8216**; e-mail **karlb@hesston.edu**.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary announces a faculty opening in the field of **church ministries**. The primary areas of teaching are preaching and worship. Candidates must have membership in a Mennonite or related church and hold a doctorate in the teaching field. Experience in congregational ministry is expected. Employment will be effective September 1998.

Send letter of application, resume and references **by Oct. 31** to **George R. Brunk III, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA 22801**. AAEO employer; women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Goshen College seeks applicants for a tenure-track teaching position in **adult-health and acute-care nursing**. Qualifications include master's degree (doctorate preferred) and teaching experience. Responsibilities include teaching junior-level clinical courses and working with other faculty members in curriculum development, implementation and evaluation. Beginning date: October, or no later than January 1998. Men and those from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and professional references to: **Paul A. Keim, Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503**; fax **(219) 535-7060**; e-mail **dean@ goshen.edu**. We encourage application through the Goshen College web site at **www.goshen.edu**.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is seeking applicants for:

- **Co-director for Africa**, focusing on Southern Africa, Uganda and Tanzania. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position based in Akron, Pa., available Dec. 1. Applicants should be fluent in English, have social, economic, political and cultural knowledge of Africa, and be willing to travel. A bachelor's degree is required and overseas experience preferred. **Applications due Nov. 1**.

- **Country representative in Dacca, Bangladesh**. This is a four- to five-year volunteer commitment available January 1998. Applicants should have a college degree, overseas experience in project/program management, personnel management and leadership skills, and ability to relate to a wide variety of people. **Applications due Dec. 1**.

For all MCC positions, qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. For more information about these jobs, or to receive job descriptions, please contact **Dwight McFadden** or **Sandra Franklin** at **MCC Personnel Department, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151**; e-mail **SLF@mcc.org**.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary has an opening for **director of admissions**, effective Feb. 16, 1998. This is a three-quarter-time position; however, additional responsibilities may be added for someone seeking full-time employment. The director of admissions develops and implements strategies for recruiting students into the programs of AMBS. Applicants should have a seminary degree, have some ministry, mission or service experience and demonstrate the ability to meet people and promote church vocations and AMBS programs. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer.

Please send a letter of application, including resume and names and addresses of three references to **Jacob W. Elias, vice president for administration, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517**; e-mail **jelias@ambs.edu**. Applications will be received until **Nov. 15** or until the position is filled.

We have begun to sense a **renewing movement of the Holy Spirit** among Mennonites. If you have a story to tell of the surprising, unusual or life-changing power of God's action in your life, we'd like to hear it. We want to give voice to those stories that have remained unspoken due to fear of dismissal or judgment. These may appear in a published collection of stories. You may choose to be identified or remain anonymous.

Please send stories **by Jan. 1, 1998**, to **Barbra Graber, 1513 N. College Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802; graberb@emu.edu** or **Tobin Miller Shearer, 621 S. Lime St., Lancaster, PA 17602; tms@mccus.org**.

Mennonite Mutual Aid is seeking a **programmer/analyst** to analyze, design, develop and/or purchase business software for our AS/400 and PC-LAN environment. The right person for this job will have or will be completing a bachelor's degree in an area such as management information systems, business, finance, accounting, computer science, mathematics, etc. This person will also possess strong skills in such areas as working with people, communications, planning, organizing and leadership potential. Two to five years of related experience is preferred. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. MMA offers an excellent, smoke-free work environment and a competitive benefit package.

Please send or fax resume to **Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax (219) 533-5264**.

Hesston College Academic Dean

Hesston College invites applications and nominations for the position of academic dean, beginning July 1, 1998.

The dean serves as the chief academic officer for a two-year college with 35 faculty members and approximately 400 students. Hesston College exists to educate and to develop the full potential of every student within community. As an institution of the Mennonite Church, Hesston College leads persons toward the model of Jesus Christ as revealed in his life and teachings and toward active participation in the church.

The college seeks candidates who are deeply committed to Christian faith as interpreted by the Mennonite church. Desired qualifications include an earned doctorate, skills in administration and faculty recruitment, college teaching experience, and the ability to lead the faculty in creative academic program development and implementation. The academic dean is a member of the administrative cabinet and reports to the president of the college.

Letters of application or nomination will be accepted until November 1 (or until the position is filled). Applicants should name four references (including one pastor or congregational leader) and enclose a curriculum vitae. All inquiries will be held in strict confidence.

Address correspondence to:
Loren Swartzendruber, president
Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062
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Reviews

FILMS

FAMILY TRAGEDY

A Thousand Acres, *written by Laura Jones; produced by Marc Abraham, Lynn Arost, Steve Golin, Kate Guinzburg and Sigurjon Sighvatsson; directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse, rated R*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

Long widowed and nearing retirement, a third-generation Iowa farmer decides to split his 1,000-acre farm evenly among his three daughters—and then, almost literally, all hell breaks loose.

The story, based on Jane Smiley's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same title, is told from the point of view of Ginny, the oldest daughter (Jessica Lange). Ginny and the middle sister, Rose (Michelle Pfeiffer), were young teenagers, and their baby sister, Caroline (Jennifer Jason Leigh), only 5, when their mother died of breast cancer. When this narrative begins, Rose herself is recovering from a mastectomy. Rose and Ginny are married to men who farm with the women's father, Larry (Jason Robards), while Caroline, a lawyer, lives in the city.

Since *A Thousand Acres* is based on Shakespeare's *King Lear*, you know from the outset it's a tragedy. Jessica Lange gives an outstanding performance as the dutiful oldest daughter who has always seen herself as the one who must hold the family steady, and in the process has literally subverted herself and her own memories. But Michelle Pfeiffer is particularly riveting as a woman who refuses to give in to self-pity, who must hold onto her anger, she says, in order to stay alive. Jennifer Jason Leigh is fine as a young woman trying to convince herself and everyone else that she knows who she is, unable to admit that part of that identity is "motherless daughter."

The performance of the actresses is the main reason for seeing this movie. Although the land itself is filmed beautifully and lovingly, that only partly works to explain to viewers why those 1,000 acres are worth all this anguish (perhaps that's the point). But I was most disturbed by the unbalanced portrayal of the men. They seem incapable of anything besides drinking and driving, committing incest, spending money they don't have, humiliating their friends and family in public and using women sexually before eventually abandoning them.

Buena Vista

Betrayal in the heartland: *From left, Jessica Lange, Michelle Pfeiffer and Jennifer Jason Leigh as three Iowa sisters.*

Go to this movie to see some of the best screen performances of the year by women, but don't go expecting to be uplifted.

I would like to add a plug for a completely different movie that is getting an unexpected amount of attention: *The Full Monty*. Some unemployed steelworkers in the north of England decide they can strike it rich by put-ting together a male stripper act. Don't let this premise put you off: The film gives a touching, clear-eyed and often hilarious picture of men's relationships with each other, both as peers and father-to-son, and some surprising and realistically subtle lessons about gender roles and expectations. It's a good balance to the weak character development of the men in *A Thousand Acres*.

BOOKS

HEROES OF FAITH

A Passion for Life: Fragments of the Face of God *by Joan Chittister, icons by Robert Lentz (Orbis, 1996, 132 pages, $30 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editor

This beautiful book looks at 29 individual heroes of faith, plus one group of martyrs. I don't use the word "saint" because only a few of them are official saints of the Catholic Church.

The author offers these people's lives as models, because "in times of uncertainty and stress and tension, we look for people like ourselves, reachable figures, who have lived well

This is the land that I promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...

Deuteronomy 34:4

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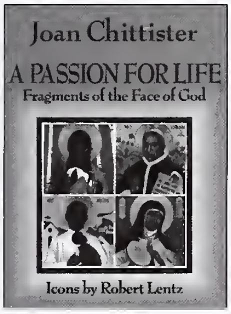
through situations similar to our own as proof that we too, in all of our smallness, can stretch ourselves to the limits of the best in us."

Her purpose is not to glorify these heroes but to learn from them. "Sanctity," she writes, "is simply a matter of living for the coming of the reign of God with conscience, with voice and with authenticity."

She does more than tell their stories; she calls readers to lives of justice, to oppose the powers that "educate us to believe that what is legal is good, that what is male is best, that what is common is necessary."

The spectrum of heroes included here is broad, from Eve to Thomas Merton. Of the 37 people listed, 16 are women, four are biblical figures, four others are not Christian.



The book also includes 21 full-color icons by Robert Lentz. I wished for commentaries on the icons themselves, an explanation of what some of the images represent.

Chittister is good at making connections between the stories of these people and our late 20th-century context. She includes many helpful insights. For example, she explains how Mary Magdalene was "the first woman minister." Dorothy Day "was [like] one of the people [Day] dedicated her life to serving. She was not an uptown philanthropist."

The book falters at points, however. Chittister says that the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Dec. 7, 1941, an error an editor should have caught. And her Catholic blinders show when she offers the Protestant Reformation as a contributing factor to the killing of Indians in the Americas.

Nevertheless, this is an excellent book, a treasure to both look at and read.

LOOKING CLOSER

Man Under a Pear Tree *by Keith Ratzlaff (Anhinga Press, 1997, 70 pages, $10 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Gwen Groff, Lancaster, Pa.

Keith Ratzlaff shows us the details of his world in a way that makes us want to look more closely at our own. The subjects of his poems include various part of the human body, successful and unsuccessful suicide attempts, some Schubert and lots of Paul Klee, and students writing poetry beside a cemetery. There is a woman "on a bicycle with twin baskets:/one holding the groceries,/one holding the cancer" and, of course, a man under a pear tree.

Ratzlaff regards children without sentimentality. A boy: "This is the boy next door discovering/what he wants his voice to do/... He fakes a bicycle crash on the ice,/jumps up, and yodels his imitation of a siren/... This is the boy who has been dying all day/ hoarse and unrescued, going in to supper." And a girl: "The picture her daughter drew of a house/some clouds, two ankles, two shoes/disappearing off the top of the page/It's a woman flying above our house, the girl had said/And thinking of the abstraction, the new stage/it signalled in her daughter's development/The five simple lines around the shoes that mean motion/ and up and trailing away/And wishing it might be her, the woman flying/ blessed for no reason with a great invisible gift."

Ratzlaff touches on theology: "God is a chair/to sit in/and the act of sitting." But most of his subjects are details viewed up close.

One of my favorites, "Fitful Angel," is about a dream sequence. "Oh God, who once/was behind the door, this is a terrible room to wake in as if/it were everywhere." He includes the inane details of dreams that demand attention: "I used to have dreams I was a peasant with a monkey I/could sing to. The songs were impromptu, the kind you find/stupidly in the air. 'Oh don't tell the monkey,' I sang once,/ 'oh don't tell the monkey, oh don't tell the monkey, that/you are going away.' Paul McCartney sorts of things."

Ratzlaff insists, "These/were the ways my dreams really worked," and I believe him. He has the unusual ability to make us delight in the oddities of another's dreams as we do our own: "Once I/was a painter with a monkey. We would load big canvases/onto a wheelbarrow and wobble down the lane to the/marsh where I painted the yellow grass and purplish water./The monkey handed me brushes I didn't need. I dreamed/this, night after night, until the painting was finished, but by/then it was of pines and the monkey had a blue shirt on and/stole from me."

At least one poem is shamelessly happy. A man in Crete gives "a small wild orchid. 'Blume' he said in German, since he knew/the Greek would mean nothing to us/... Already we were reduced to what we could say/in German to Greeks: blue: blau orchid in a glass jar set outside the window,/ orchid the fat man should not have picked/but we are happy he did,/ orchid which survived all the way to Phaistos and back,/orchid still unfolding on the roof: Blume." Reading this collection will make you want to go outside, look around and write something down.

Mennonite Mutual Aid has an opening for a **technical support specialist** to assemble, troubleshoot and repair PCs and to provide Novell, NT server, Win95 and NT desktop support. Qualified candidates will have a bachelor's degree, PC assembly/maintenance experience, proven positive people skills, and good analytical skills. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. MMA offers an excellent work environment and a competitive benefit package.

Please send or fax resume to **Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax (219) 533-5264.**

Urgent openings in **Mennonite Central Committee communications**, Akron, Pa. **Video producer**—three-year, full-time position. Applications due **Nov. 30, 1997. Writer/editor**—two-year, half-time (20 hours/week) position. Applications due **Dec. 31, 1997.** Both positions are available on either salaried, local service worker or service worker arrangement. All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith discipleship, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking.

For more information about these two openings, or to receive a job description, please contact **Prem Dick** or **Goldie Kuhns** at **Mennonite Central Committee, Personnel Department, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151;** e-mail **psd@mcc.org** or **gpk@mcc.org.**

Flatrock Mennonite Church, an established rural congregation located in Flatrock, B.C., 30 miles east of Fort St. John, is seeking a **pastor**. Position open immediately.

Send resume to **Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Brad Giesbrecht, Box 179, Cecil Lake, BC V0C 1G0; (250) 781-3580.**

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Editorial

Sensuous spirituality

Art puts us in touch with our bodily self. It is incarnational, i.e., fleshly. Just so God is made known to us through Jesus, a fleshly human being. And when we live in our head and deny our body, we deny the truth of the Incarnation.

In Mark 8:27-34 (see the Sept. 23 editorial), Jesus rebukes Peter for calling him "Messiah," a term that at that time carried the idea of a triumphant, military savior. Jesus calls himself "ben adam," a human being. Jesus experienced the senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, touch—as a human, and he calls us to live under God's reign as humans, with our senses.

Too often we live out our discipleship, our spirituality, in our heads. We follow ideas about God and experience God only in our thoughts. And we easily fall into the docetic heresy of seeing Jesus, our model for following God's way, as ethereal, only seeming to be human.

What we need is a sensuous spirituality, one that keeps us in touch with our senses, our bodies. Art helps us break through our airy notions of God and experience life through our senses.

Rejoice that God created us with bodies that feel, smell, taste, hear and see. Let art open our senses, our emotions, to a deeper, more sensual experience of our Creator.

Kathleen Norris, a poet writing in *The Christian Century* (Sept. 24-Oct. 1), calls poetry and worship "incarnational languages" that "ground themselves in bodily experience, the experience of the mouth and the ear, the sense of touch, smell, taste. They even involve that elusive thing called beauty."

Art can help deepen our experience of God, and it does so in myriad ways: music, painting, literature, drama, dance. It can lead us beyond words, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn has written: "Art thaws even the frozen, darkened soul, opening it to lofty spiritual experience."

Detail of artwork by Lora Jost

Fear of art: But we are often scared by art, perhaps because it affects or appeals to our senses. Are we afraid of music that makes us want to tap our toes? Or of paintings that challenge our usual constructs of the world? Or of poetry or fiction that makes us angry or brings us face to face with experiences that repel us? Is our fear of art or the sensual really a fear of the body?

Various kinds of religious expression involve the senses. For Jews, Native Americans and others, land is an important part of their spirituality—the soil, trees, flowers, water and air that we live with. Orthodox Christians use icons—paintings of religious figures—and incense to draw worshipers into a deeper experience of God. Communion involves the taste of bread and wine.

We Mennonites use many sensual elements in the living of our faith: the wonderful sound of four-part singing, the texture and beauty of quilts, the taste of the many foods we enjoy, the feel of sweat and the grip of a hammer as we help rebuild houses destroyed by storms.

Each day I pray using the Psalms, speaking them aloud. And it is often the rhythm of the words as much as their meaning that moves me, draws me into a closer sense of intimacy with God. The Psalms arise from emotions more than from ideas. These include anger as well as praise, lament as well as joy. They reflect the worship of God's people, living as humans in a sensual world.

Let's involve our senses in our worship and our daily lives. Rejoice that God created us with bodies that feel, smell, taste, hear and see. Let art open our senses, our emotions, to a deeper, more sensual experience of our Creator.
Gordon Houser

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 20
OCTOBER 28, 1997

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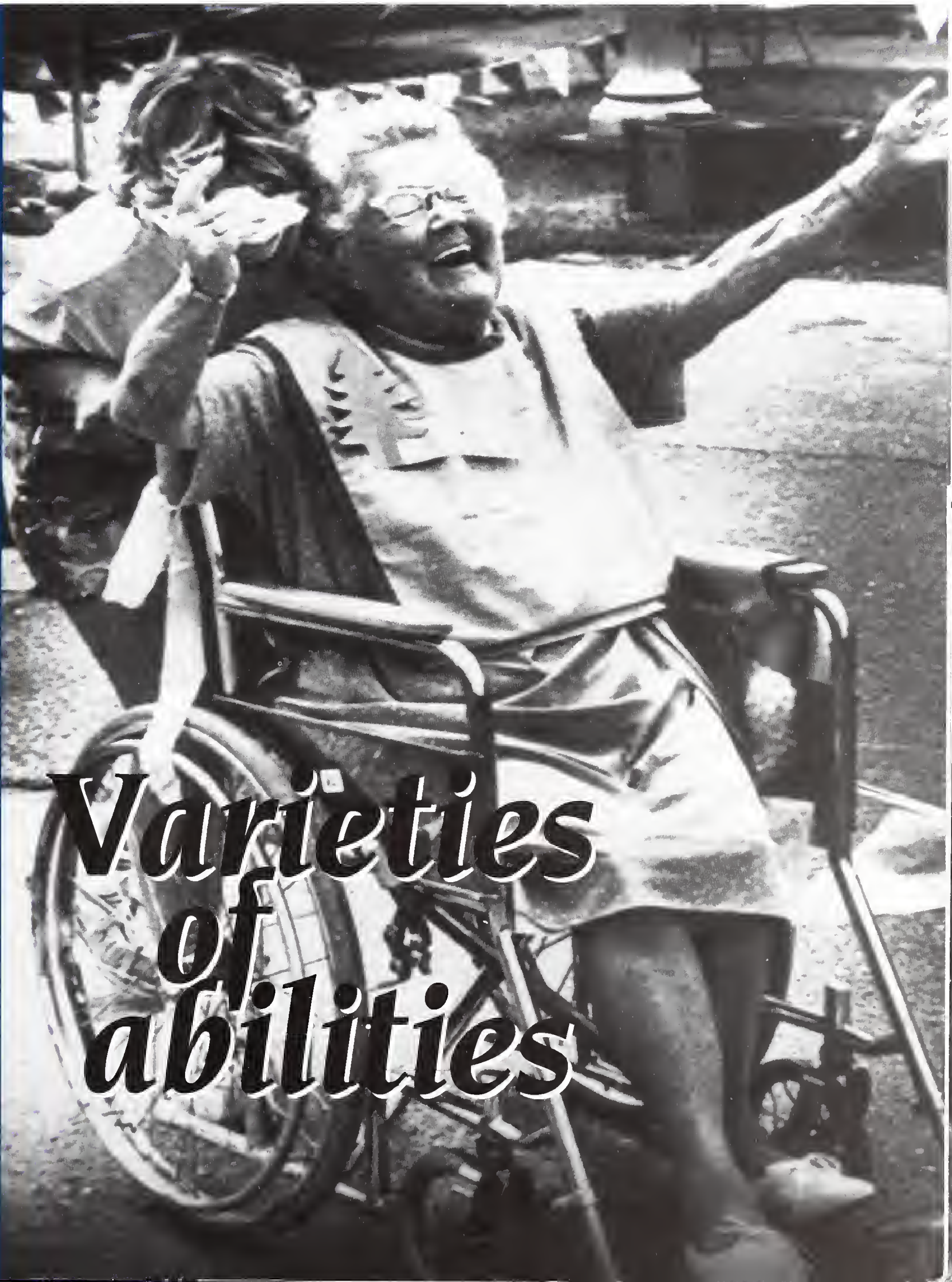

Varieties of abilities

Prologue

Look at the joy on the face of the woman on our cover. Then look at the faces of the man and the girl on page 3. Disability does not need to be a dour topic. Instead we can learn to see everyone as a person with abilities and disabilities, created by God with much potential.

In our first article (page 3), Clarence Rempel looks at how churches can be more accepting.

Jonathan Rhoads tells the story (page 6) of the welcome his family, including his son Alan, received when they returned from the hospital to their community. Children with disabilities can be messengers of God.

Anita Corrine Donihue offers helpful advice (page 7) on how to relate to children with disabilities.

Poets have a powerful way of helping us imagine experiences and feel what it is like to be in such situations. We offer three poems (page 8) by three different poets that do just that.

Janet Toews Berg addresses a topic that came up at this summer's Winnipeg conference when discussing a statement on violence—whether or not suicide is a sin (page 10).

Columnists J.B. Miller considers recent tax law changes (page 11), and Denise Preller looks at how to help children speak with people with disabilities (page 12).

We keep hearing from prisoners who want to receive *The Mennonite* but can't afford it. We depend on contributions from our readers to make that possible. Thanks. *gh*

Next issue: City on a hill—Vancouver

Cover: Photo by Religious News Service

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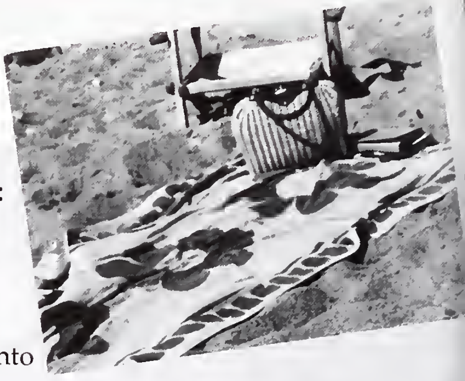

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Lifts of love, acts of acceptance

RNS photo for illustration only

Clarence Rempel

The church is called to accept and include people with a wide variety of abilities and disabilities.

For 18 years Lowell and Verda Bontrager of Goshen, Ind., cared for their daughter Tonya, who was born with microcephaly. Her brain never developed beyond that of a 6- to 9-month-old child. Tonya never spoke, but she squealed with delight. She could not walk but often had a big grin on her face as she was wheeled down the hallway of the church by her mom or dad. Through the years Tonya had been included in the life of the church with special adjustments and accommodations. Admittedly her excited squeals during the worship service were a bit distracting at times, but Tonya was included as a member of God's family.

Paul M. Schrock

When it became necessary to place Tonya in a care home, her pastor and congregation came up with a creative act of acceptance for Tonya and a meaningful lift of love for Tonya's parents.

She was received as a member of her Mennonite congregation by a special prayer of blessing rather than baptism. In receiving Tonya as a member, the congregation was pledging their support and care.

The church is called to accept and include people with a wide variety of abilities and disabilities.

It should be expected that 15 to 18 percent of our extended church family has significant, ongoing, life-interfering mental, physical or emotional disabilities. That's around 30 people in a worshiping congregation of 200. Another 60 percent of us are "TABS," temporarily able-bodied. We can expect to become disabled at some point or for some period of our lives. So when we talk about welcoming people with disabilities, we are not talking about accepting and including only one or two people. Many have disabilities.

1 Corinthians 12 emphasizes the preciousness of each person in the body of Christ. When I first read this passage, I expected the stronger of mind and body to be told to be more including and accepting. But the first word is spoken to those who may seem less able and who may feel on the margins of community and church life. "Don't exclude yourselves. Claim your belonging in the body of Christ. Claim your belonging in the church." That's the message of 1 Corinthians 12:14-20.

"If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body" (v. 15). To paraphrase, "If a person using a wheelchair asks, 'Because I am not able to walk, do I for that reason cease to be a member of the body?' No, of course not."

If you feel like excluding yourself from the life and worship of this body, don't do it. Insist on being included. "And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body" (v. 16). Again to paraphrase, "And if a person with Down syndrome asks, 'Since I don't fit into the church's educational program, do I for that reason cease to belong to the church?' No, of course not; you are a part of the body."

Claim your belonging in the body of Christ. I congratulate the senior citizens who are dealing with a variety of disabilities, for their insistence and persistence in being in church for worship on Sunday morning. You come with your canes, your walkers and your wheelchairs. You come with your hip replacements, knee replacements; some of you have had so many surgeries, you're only about 75 percent original. You make the adjustments to increasing disability and refuse to exclude yourselves. You come with congestive heart failure, severe arthritis or asthma, incontinence problems, sugar and blood pressure fluctuations. You come with your hearing and seeing disabilities. You come with your memory losses and malfunctions, but one thing you have not forgotten: You are precious in the sight of God; you are precious in the body of Christ.

Verse 17 says, "If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?" To paraphrase, "If the whole church were strong, how would we ever learn the sense of mercy and grace?" Lowell Bontrager, Tonya's father, says, "We first thank God for Tonya. She has taught us so much: how to love unconditionally and to accept people just as they are. God gave us Tonya for a reason, and we hope to use her life here with us to glorify God. She has taught us not to worry about people's thoughts of us but to be concerned about God's thoughts of us."

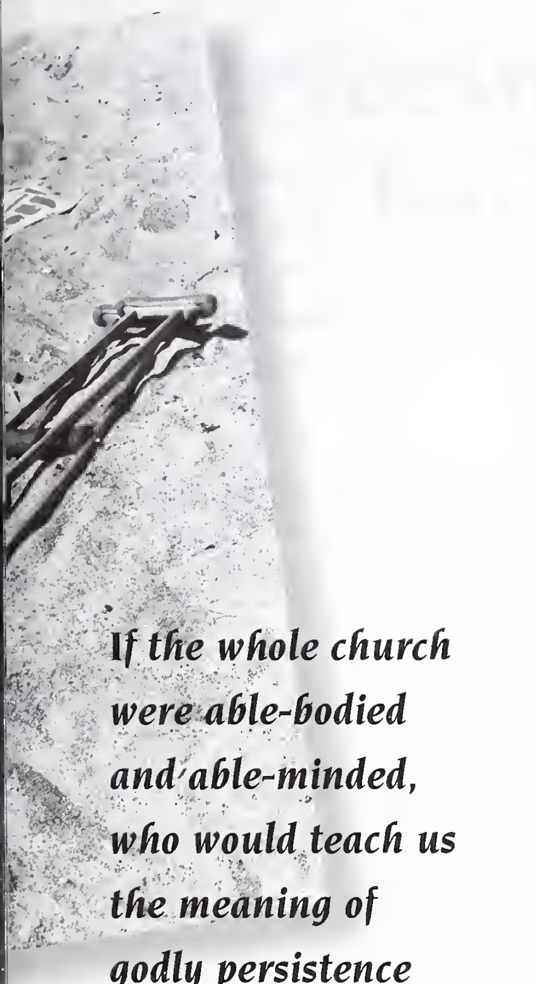
If the whole church were able-bodied and able-minded, who would teach us the meaning of godly persistence and holy endurance? Who would teach us the fullness of faith and hope?

Don't exclude yourself; insist on being included. Claim your belonging in the church. You have an irreplaceable role in the life of this church. According to verse 18, "God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be." God has a place for those with disabilities in the church, and we honor that.

The message in verses 21-26, addressed to the stronger, is "Don't exclude others. Affirm their belonging. Make room for their participation with your attitudes and your activities."

Attitudes for acceptance (verses 21-22): The Bible insists that we who are able-minded and able-bodied need an attitude adjustment. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you.' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable" (vv. 21-22).

Notice the careful choice of words—"seem to be weaker." Those with mental, emotional and physical disabilities may seem weaker by our cul-



If the whole church were able-bodied and able-minded, who would teach us the meaning of godly persistence and holy endurance?

tural values of strength and beauty, but by God's values of character, wisdom, godliness, faith, hope and love, they are often stronger. Those with chronic weakness, with permanent disabilities, are indispensable. The Bible doesn't call for toleration—"They can come to our Sunday school if they want to"—but for an attitude of indispensability: "Our church life would be impoverished without people with disabilities. We have to include them. We have to adjust facilities, adjust curriculum, adjust programming in order to insist that people with disabilities can participate with a minimum of barriers to discourage them. The new attitude is, "We can't get along without you. We can't become a whole church, a healthy church, without the seemingly weaker member."

I think of Karen, who survived on Social Security disability. There were mental, emotional and relational limitations that just seemed to overwhelm the possibility of Karen ever working full-time and supporting herself. Emotionally she reminded me of a child 8 to 10 years old. Karen had addictive weaknesses—nicotine and alcohol. She had body weaknesses, one of which was being overweight to the point of it interfering with her mobility and body care. Karen was troubled with vast emotional swings, from giddy happiness to abysmal depression. Karen was a mess, but she was and is an indispensable mess.

Karen also had a spiritual desire, a hunger for God that challenged all of us in her small group or in her Sunday school class. Karen had a delightful honesty. She shared with such openness in small group about her struggles and failures that all of us were moved to be more honest before God and each other. Karen could get us rolling with laughter. She was a master at telling stories on herself. She could get into and usually out of some of the craziest predicaments. Karen was not only devoted to God but to her brothers and sisters in Christ, to her church. She had a great compassion for people in need and kept us alert to opportunities of mercy. In my last phone conversation with Karen she was all excited about finding and claiming prayer as her primary ministry in the life of the church. When we adopt an attitude of acceptance, it will be followed by actions of acceptance and inclusion: "And the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor" (v. 23).

Actions of acceptance and inclusion:

1. Including churches are careful about respectful language. People with disabilities ask that people-first language be used. That's why the phrase "people who are disabled" is preferred over labels like "the blind" and "the disabled." Better to speak of spastic muscles than a spastic person.

Many times there is no reason to even mention the disabling condition because it is only one characteristic of many. Do we pick out one characteristic of those losing their hair and constantly call them "the balded"?

Being careful with language is helpful, but don't be intimidated by the need to say just the right words. Talking to (and about) people with disabilities is more important than using correct terminology. Be sensitive, but don't let uncertainty about words keep you from ordinary conversations. Feel free to ask, "How is the best way to say … ?"

2. Including, accepting churches make their buildings and programs accessible. Elevators, wheelchair seating in the sanctuary, accessible rest rooms, a private rest room with a lockable door where, for example, a wife can assist her husband or a parent a child, drive-under drinking fountains and lowered coat racks communicate, "We care." Large-print bulletins and portable audio receivers communicate, "We want to include you."

3. Inclusive, accepting churches are also attentive to the needs of primary caregivers. Grace Goering cared for her husband for 20 years in his battle with the gradual mental and physical deterioration brought on by Parkinson's disease. For the last six years of John's life that meant total care 24 hours per day, seven days a week. I asked Grace, "How did you do it?"

She said, "I prayed every day that the Lord would meet our needs and give me strength. God did, and we got by."

I asked, "How could the church have supported you? What would have been helpful?"

"We sure would have been encouraged by occasional friendly visits. Albert Budde came to see John even though communication was poor, and that was great. Sometimes I seemed pretty alone in carrying the burden. I appreciated people asking how I was doing. Just to have more company would have been a lift."

We want to be a church that provides lifts of love and actions of acceptance. Our Vision: Healing and Hope statement affirms that we want "to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world." Our inclusion of people with disabilities will be a long step in that direction.

Clarence Rempel is pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan. This article is based on a sermon he gave there.

A messenger of God

A community of faith welcomes Alan and his family into a place of love.

Jonathan Rhoads

The birth of our son Alan was a joyful, long-awaited moment—our first child. But we soon noticed he had problems, especially that he wouldn't nurse and seemed unable to suck or swallow. Soon we had to rush him to the Albany (N.Y.) Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

With the help of a feeding tube Alan turned the corner and began to gain weight. Eventually we could bring him home, but the hardships were not over. Feeding was still a long battle, and our pediatrician was concerned about Alan's hearing, his nearly-closed eyes and his hips.

We kept taking Alan to Albany for one test after another. At three months he was admitted for 10 days of extensive tests, including an EEG. The specialist was blunt: "Your child can't see or hear, he won't walk or talk, his brain is not normal." We were stunned, heartsick.

But Gretchen and I are fortunate—we live in the Bruderhof, a Christian community where each child is welcomed and loved by all. After those long 10 days in Albany, we came home and shared our need with brothers and sisters; our pastor, Christoph Arnold, and his wife, Verena; our community doctor, Milton, and others.

We felt enfolded by the love of this family of families. It was just 100 days until Christmas, and Christoph called the community together for a special meeting to welcome Alan home from the hospital. The children, as well as all the grown-ups, were invited to help celebrate his arrival. Three buses of people from our sister community eight miles away also came. The meeting room was lighted by candles, and in the middle was a small, lighted Christmas tree. By the tree, a candle burned for Alan. Everyone waited expectantly, singing one Christmas song after another.

When we walked into that room we felt an outpouring of love and support. Alan was hungry and tired, so we fed and comforted him while we listened as our pastor spoke to us with compassion, easing our pain and giving us new faith:

"Now the main reason we are here tonight is the great joy of having Jonathan and Gretchen's little Alan with us. Every child is a gift from God, and Alan is a special gift. I plead with everyone, children and grown-ups, to receive him into our community with great love, because he has been given to his parents with multiple handicaps.

"The doctors told us that Alan is possibly deaf, very likely blind, has brain abnormalities, and we don't know if he will ever walk or talk. That's how it looks now, but with God everything is possible. Love is the most important thing, and if any child ever needed love, it is Alan. It is through that love that he will flourish. Even medical studies have proven that love and security can cause miracles.

"So, dear Jonathan and Gretchen, you should feel yourselves fortunate to have received a child like this because he is a messenger of God. Through your little Alan, God wants to reveal a mystery that otherwise would not be shown. You will learn love and compassion for the weak ones, the disabled and the elderly. So see Alan as a gift from God and thank God for him every day. Never accuse yourselves. You should actually sing songs of praise to God."

Christoph had known it would be difficult when people asked, "How's Alan doing?" and we did not know what to say. We felt so relieved that now everybody knew of Alan's fight and could support him. These words gave us our direction.

Christoph took Alan in his arms, and we prayed together, thanking God for this little boy, trusting him to God's will, whether the miracle of healing or

A special gift: *Alan and his parents*

When we walked into that room we felt an outpouring of love and support.

bearing the handicaps. We believe miracles can happen, but we put Alan in God's hands, knowing that God's will is the best for Alan and us all. When Christoph gave Alan back to us, he encouraged us to look with hope to the future.

My youngest brother, Samuel, sat on my lap as close as he could get to his new nephew. After the last song, many other children crowded around us to touch Alan's cheek or stroke his hair. This meeting was so positive, so encouraging. The entire community was so supportive.

We want to pass that message on to other parents of special children. It is hard sometimes because you face so many unknowns, but we are learning to take one day at a time, not trying to predict the future.

The doctors cannot tell us any specifics yet. Alan will just grow and develop in his own way. A lot of that depends on how we care for him at home. So we just enjoy him, like when we give him a bath in the big tub, watching how he enjoys the water. There are times when we are at our wits' end and when he's fussy, but then we remind each other of the joyful times. It is important in the low times to talk to somebody.

We want to make a joyful home for Alan, rejoicing over him every day, showing him lots of love and doing a lot of praying.

Jonathan, Gretchen and Alan Rhoads live in the Bruderhof communities, a group of families and singles living in Christian community, sharing all things.

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7 things disabled kids want you to know

Anita Corrine Donihue

Disabled kids sense how we react to them. We may not say or do anything unkind, but they can tell how we feel. Although they're not always able to express themselves, they understand a great deal more than they're given credit for. Thoughtless little things bother them: whispered remarks, snickers when things go wrong, being left out of school and church activities. Even someone's body language can hurt.

Here are some things disabled children would like you to know.

1. Accept me for who I am. Don't be afraid to get to know me. I may be slow physically or mentally, but I'm good company when you give me a chance. Take time to enjoy me. I like being invited to go places and do things with friends, but I don't get invited very often.

2. Sometimes I need a friend. I need a friend who can help me break down the barriers that isolate me from the rest of the world. I can't get places without help. For instance, when I have trouble reading, you could sit by me and read the lesson in Sunday school or sing the hymn in the church service so I can hear the words.

3. Talk to me as you would any other person. Don't speak to me in baby talk. I'm not an infant or a pet. At times I may have difficulty and my speech may sound different, but I try to say the words right. Sometimes I talk by signing with my hands. When you talk, just slow down a bit.

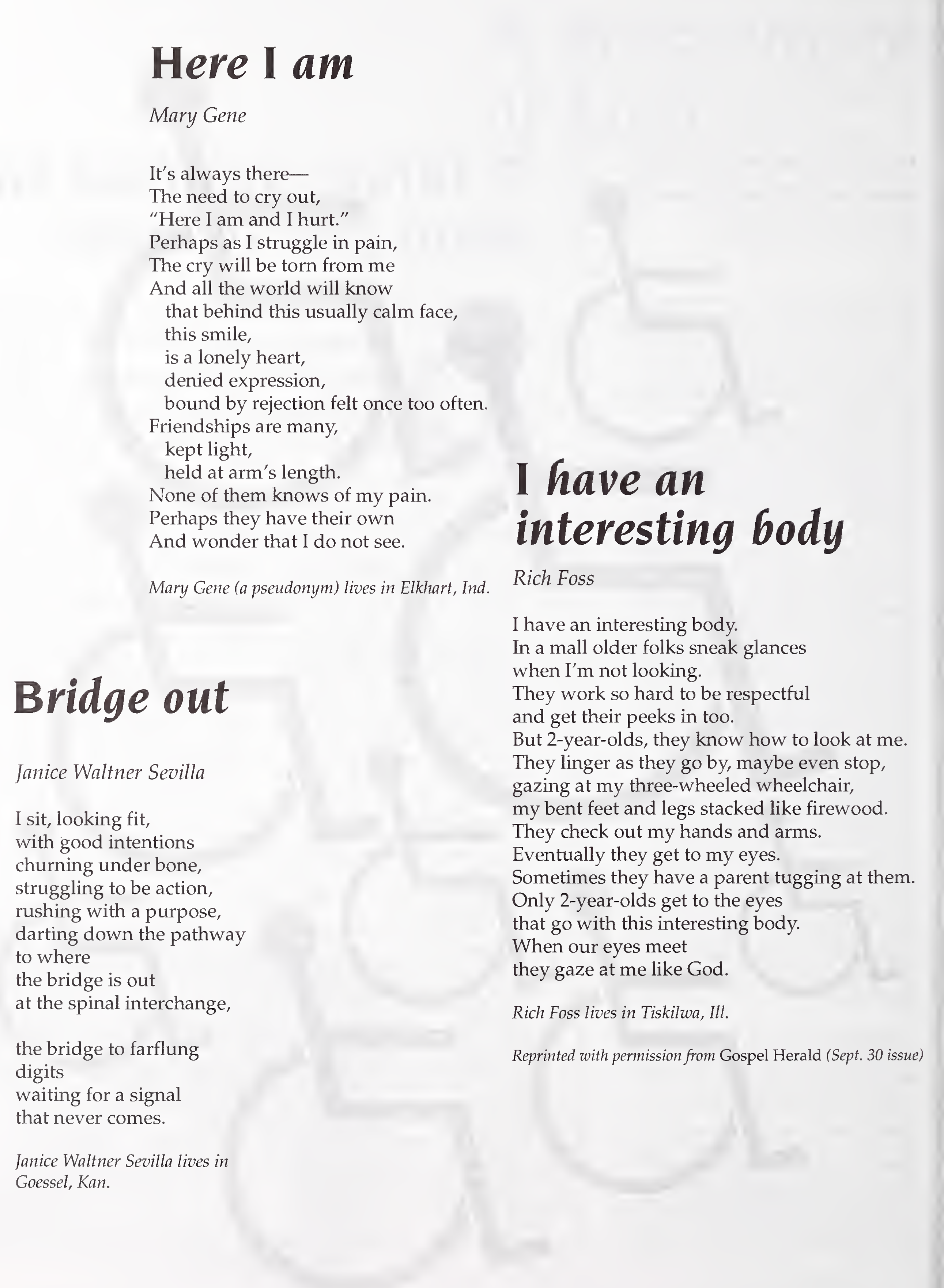
4. Let me try to do my best. I may take longer and need your patience, but I may surprise you. Don't do things for me. Ask me if I want help. I'm proud of my work, even if it isn't perfect. And please, don't go back and redo it.

5. Don't feel sorry for me. I enjoy life and can make your life a little brighter, but only if you let me. If we respect each other, we can learn from each other.

6. Be patient when I mess up. I sometimes say and do things that are not appropriate. By carefully explaining things to me, you can help me learn proper social skills. Be understanding when things don't go well.

7. Know that I love God—and God loves me. I know God doesn't love me more than others, but God placed me on earth for a reason. God knows all my imperfections and, best of all, loves me just the way I am. Can you do the same?

Anita Corrine Donihue lives in Auburn, Wash.



Here I am

Mary Gene

It's always there—
The need to cry out,
"Here I am and I hurt."
Perhaps as I struggle in pain,
The cry will be torn from me
And all the world will know
  that behind this usually calm face,
  this smile,
  is a lonely heart,
  denied expression,
  bound by rejection felt once too often.
Friendships are many,
  kept light,
  held at arm's length.
None of them knows of my pain.
Perhaps they have their own
And wonder that I do not see.

Mary Gene (a pseudonym) lives in Elkhart, Ind.

Bridge out

Janice Waltner Sevilla

I sit, looking fit,
with good intentions
churning under bone,
struggling to be action,
rushing with a purpose,
darting down the pathway
to where
the bridge is out
at the spinal interchange,

the bridge to farflung
digits
waiting for a signal
that never comes.

Janice Waltner Sevilla lives in Goessel, Kan.

I *have an interesting body*

Rich Foss

I have an interesting body.
In a mall older folks sneak glances
when I'm not looking.
They work so hard to be respectful
and get their peeks in too.
But 2-year-olds, they know how to look at me.
They linger as they go by, maybe even stop,
gazing at my three-wheeled wheelchair,
my bent feet and legs stacked like firewood.
They check out my hands and arms.
Eventually they get to my eyes.
Sometimes they have a parent tugging at them.
Only 2-year-olds get to the eyes
that go with this interesting body.
When our eyes meet
they gaze at me like God.

Rich Foss lives in Tiskilwa, Ill.

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Letters

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CONVINCED MENNONITE

I am incarcerated in the state of California. Since my incarceration 10 years ago I have accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. I have since become a "convinced" Mennonite. I strive each day to become more Christlike and to let his light shine through me.

I was recently blessed with a copy of the July 22 issue of *The Mennonite*. I loved it. It would mean so much to me if you could bless me with a subscription. Due to my incarceration and my current financial situation I just can't afford to pay for a subscription. *Corey A. Aldridge, San Diego, Calif.*

Editor's note: *At present, 17 prisoners receive* The Mennonite. *However, our fund that allows prisoners to receive the magazine is in the hole. Please send contributions to Prisoners Fund, c/o* The Mennonite, *P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Thanks.*

OBEY THE LAW OF GOD

As my mind drifts over the past 37 years, I often reflect on the highlights of my Mennonite experience. There were Christian influences of Camp Friedenswald: Ben the director, Carl the counselor, Sharon the editor, and a kindly lady counselor that asked us to stand if we would accept Christ as Savior. These experiences paint a collage in my mind that I often contemplate.

I also have warm feelings toward Reverend Gehring, who asked me to consider going to seminary just after I graduated from Eureka College in 1970. Though I felt honored, it was more than I could digest. Soon I found myself in basic training at Fort Lewis, Wash. My stateside duty in the Northwest led me to a Protestant denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The whole issue of Sabbath observance confronted me (see Aug. 26 issue).

Mennonite beliefs center around an understanding of apostolic thought. With this in mind, there is a continuum from apostolic times to the present. After careful examination it was my conclusion that there was an emphasis of Sabbath observance from Genesis through Revelation that underscores the concept of cooperation with the Lord by aligning one's life with the whole law of God. In other words, our Lord desires us not only to have principles that apply to a day of rest, but to put this respect of the law of God in place by Sabbath observance. Jesus stated in John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commandments." This love for Christ will be in harmony with the principles of New Testament grace.

May the Lord grant each of us wisdom and an attitude of caring as we continue our spiritual journeys. I am looking forward in the future for additional comments. *Bob Patton, Richmond, Ind.*

PREJUDICE IS SUBTLE

I appreciated the article on anti-Semitism in the July 22 issue ("Mennonite anti-Semitism," page 9).

This last spring, I was riding in a car on the way home from a small-group function with three other women from my church. The two women in the front seat were talking about teaching Old Testament stories in Sunday school. One of the women, whom I'll call Margaret, mentioned how the Jews complained and complained throughout the Exodus. Then she said, "And they're still complaining today," and went on to say, among other things, that even though Jews have so much money and drive such nice cars they still complain and complain.

I felt like I'd been punched in the stomach. I'm half Jewish. The conversation continued in this vein for a few moments. Then I said, "My Jewish relatives vary a lot in their economic circumstances," and I talked a little about them. When I finished, the conversation continued as if I hadn't spoken.

About a half hour after arriving home, I called Margaret. She thanked me for what I said in the car. She even said how glad she was that I had been there to witness her comments so she could be confronted about them. She confessed that if I hadn't been there she wouldn't have thought a thing about what she'd said.

After that conversation, I thought about how I have also made sweeping statements about other ethnic groups. I realized how important it is for our churches and our circles of friends to include people from a variety of ethnic and religious heritages—this is the only way our sensitivity to others and respect for other cultures can grow.

This morning Margaret and I met for coffee and discussed a draft of this letter. She agreed with me that we not use our real names here, not because we want to hide or are afraid of condemnation. Our anonymity is important because Margaret could be the woman sitting next to you in church. I could be the person chatting with you over coffee after the service. What we learned through this is that prejudice isn't something that afflicts only the obviously bigoted but is much more subtle. What happened in that car could happen to any of us. I pray that it does, because we all have prejudices. We each need to have the opportunity to stare them in the face, work them through with someone and come out on the other side with a renewed vision of what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ. *Name withheld*

KEEPING IN TOUCH

People often write to the editor to gripe about something. I have nothing to gripe about, but your [fund-appeal] letter challenged me to write.

I enjoy *The Mennonite*, though I have to read with a reading glass. I read all the fine-printed news, and I read the editorial comments, which I affirm out loud—Right on. You can't hear this, so I wanted to tell you by letter.

I am 90 years old, and my eyes are failing me, but *The Mennonite* keeps me in touch with what our people are doing. I used to be involved in our mission program, and it means a lot to me to keep informed.

I am interested in the *slow* development of the General Conference and Mennonite Church union. Perhaps that is a good sign that it will be done right. It also reminds me of a saying: "We should always be ready to sacrifice what we are for what we can become." *Arthur C. Waltner, North Newton, Kan.*

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Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity.*

Speaking out

Is suicide a sin?

A statement on violence needs to mention suicide.

Janet Toews Berg

I am hearing voices telling me to kill myself,” said a weary woman’s voice on the other end of the line. The telephone woke me out of a deep sleep. I was new in residency training, and at 3 a.m. it was not easy to bring to mind the techniques for handling psychiatric emergencies. I asked background questions: Who is your usual therapist? What medications are you taking? What happened yesterday? What has worked in the past? What brings you to call at this particular time?

She dutifully answered my questions, then came back with the question I had been avoiding and dreading. “What shall I do?” Giving advice was something I had not been trained to do. In fact, I was learning to do the opposite: help people solve their own problems by carefully listening and being neutral. After many minutes it became clear this was not working. Here was a seriously suicidal woman who wanted advice from me.

I gave in and gave advice. She met everything with negatives. She had heard it all before. She had obviously talked to many other new psychiatric residents before me, collecting suggestions to counter the deadly voices. It even crossed my mind that she was hired by the residency program to test me, and I was failing. Finally, in exasperation, I threw off all professionalism and said to her, “I don’t suppose it would help just to tell you not to kill yourself.” To my utter amazement she said, “Oh yes, that would help a lot. You see, with all these bad voices telling me to kill myself, what I need is a few good voices telling me not to.”

Those words have stayed with me through years of practice, reminding me that I am a voice for life, helping counter the voices of destruction.

Biological illness: I was on vacation when I first heard about the statement on violence discussed at the Winnipeg conference in July (see July 22 issue, page 14). I received a letter from my aunt, who had attended the conference, asking for my response to the wording of the portion on violence against self. At first reading I agreed with her. “We call the church to name violence against self as sin” was too negative and too simplistic. How can the church call suicide a sin? It is a symptom of a biological illness. It reopened the pain of being part of a family that has grieved suicide more than once. Without wearing my clinical hat, I thought only about myself and my family, and I wanted the statement deleted so that we would not have to think about it. Then I went back to work. In less than a week it seemed like not such a bad idea to call suicide a sin.

> ***One of the strongest voices—and thus my most positive ally—is a person’s religious belief that suicide is wrong.***

In my work as a psychiatrist, suicide is the enemy. I battle against it every day. I talk to people about suicidal thoughts; I read about suicide prevention in medical journals; and I am made aware at professional meetings that suicide is one of the leading causes of malpractice suits against psychiatrists. I must document in my charts that I have asked about suicidal tendencies. Whenever I write a prescription I must think about whether the amount of medication I give could become a lethal weapon.

When I counsel people who are struggling with suicidal thoughts, I try to help them sort out the forces for and against suicide, then reinforce the reasons they have for staying alive. I have come to think of them as the “good voices.” They range from mundane (“Who would take care of my cat?”) to sacred (“I’m afraid I would be committing the unpardonable sin”) and from temporary (“I want to stay alive long enough to see Harrison Ford’s new movie”) to permanent (“I don’t know if I could do this to my family”). I help the person listen to each voice: None is considered too trivial or guilt-producing. Here is one situation where I do not try to minimize guilt; rather I reinforce it to buy time to help the person over the crisis. One of the strongest voices—and thus my most positive ally—is a person’s religious belief that suicide is wrong.

I must here make a distinction between suicidal thoughts and the act of suicide. I do not believe that suicidal thoughts can be named sin because they are usually involuntary. They are symptoms of severe medical or emotional illness. On the other hand, the act of suicide is more deliberate, done after much agonizing, ambivalence, thinking and planning. It is in this stage that the suicidal person most needs to hear the voices saying, “No, don’t do it.” But is that any reason to call suicide a sin? Is it my selfishness to use guilt on a vulnerable, suffering person to buy time?

Karl Menninger, a well-known psychiatrist and founder of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kan., wrote *Whatever Became of Sin* (1973). He believes we have turned former sins into symptoms of illness, that we have quieted the voices of clergy who used to speak out against sin and thereby have given up individual and societal responsibility. He says, “If a dozen people are in a lifeboat and one of them discovers a leak near where he is sitting, is there any doubt as to his responsibility? Not for having made the hole, or for finding it, but for attempting to repair it. To ignore it or keep silent about it is almost equivalent to having made it. Thus even in group actions, there is a degree of personal responsibility, either for doing or not doing—or for declaring a position about it. The word ‘sin’ involves those considerations, and upon this I base the usefulness of a revival of the concept, if not the word, sin.”

The statement on violence is doing what Menninger is talking about. By adopting this statement we are saying as a church, We are all in this boat together. We accept personal and corporate responsibility for violence of all

“Speaking out” and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite.*

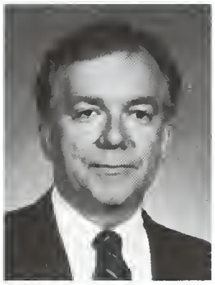
Fiscal health

How to pay for college for your children

A look at recent tax law changes and how those affect saving for your children's education

J.B. Miller

Parents often ask, "How am I going to pay for my children's college education?" While the answers are not easy, with recent U.S. tax revisions, taxpayers paying for a child's college education may have gotten a little relief.



J.B. Miller is financial service product manager for AMA Solutions, Inc., in Chicago.

Primarily in the form of education tax incentives, these reforms attempt to address the growing concern that higher education is becoming too expensive for anyone but the very elite. While the programs may seem complicated (what tax matter isn't), the fact remains that there is tax relief for some people.

Starting in 1998, the "Hope Scholarship Credit" will be available. It can be applied against federal income taxes for qualifying tuition and related expenses. This tuition and corresponding expenses must be for the student's first two years of post-secondary training, and of course must be at an eligible educational institution. The credit is subject to a phase-out for higher income taxpayers. The maximum allowable credit is equal to 100 percent of the first $1,000 of qualifying expenses paid during the year, plus 50 percent of the next $1,000 of expenses. The maximum credit allowed is $1,500. Educational expenses must be for the taxpayer, the taxpayer's spouse or a dependent, and the student must be at least a half-time student for a minimum of one academic period during the year. These credits are available for expenses incurred in 1998.

Another tax incentive is the "Lifetime Learning Credit," which is available for educational expenses not eligible for the Hope Scholarship Credit. Currently the Lifetime Learning Credit is equal to 20 percent of expenses with a maximum tax credit of $1,000. This credit is generally available for educational expenses paid after June 30, 1998, for educational periods beginning after that date.

Both the Hope and Lifetime credits are reduced or phased-out completely based on the taxpayer's income. The credit phase-out begins with a modified adjusted gross income (AGI) of $40,000 on a single tax return, $80,000 on a joint return. There is no tax benefit for incomes greater than $50,000 and $100,000, respectively.

Student loan interest expense: The Tax Reform Act of 1986 made interest paid on student loans a nondeductible item. With this latest tax legislation, this also will change. Under the new law, certain deductions will be allowed on interest paid during the first five years in which interest payments are required. Maximum deductible amounts are $1,000, beginning in 1998, and increasing by $500 each year until 2001, when it reaches a maximum of $2,500. As with the other programs, student loan interest expense is phased-out for taxpayers who exceed certain income levels. For joint returns, full phase-out occurs at $75,000 AGI.

In addition to these tax advantages, educational individual retirement accounts were also developed. Beginning in 1998, contributions of up to $500 per year, per beneficiary, may be made until the beneficiary reaches age 18. Any withdrawals to pay qualified post-secondary educational expenses of the account beneficiary are tax-free. While the initial contribution is made with after-tax dollars, the earnings from the investment grow tax-free. This account can be a real benefit, particularly for those who begin planning today for educational events 10 to 15 years in the future.

Again, as with the other programs, allowable contributions are phased-out for those in high-income brackets. Once modified AGI has reached $160,000 for a joint return, no contribution to an education IRA is allowed.

These reforms attempt to address the growing concern that higher education is becoming too expensive for anyone but the very elite. There is tax relief for some people.

The 1997 revisions to the tax law are at times very complicated. There are particular intricacies with the educational aspects. As always, be sure to consult with your tax adviser when questions arise.

SPEAKING OUT *continued*

kinds, and we agree to do something about it. Calling violence against self a sin understandably raised heated discussion, but is this not the first step toward destigmatizing conditions that for years have been hushed up?

I hope this statement will be taken not as a condemnation of people who have acted on suicidal thoughts but as a consolation to people who feel they struggle alone. After living and working with these ideas for the weeks since my aunt's letter, I am convinced that whether or not the original wording remains, it was important that suicide be named something in the statement on violence. Being part of a church that is able openly to take a stand such as this helps my voice feel stronger, whether it is helping someone through the night or dealing with the threats suicide brings to my family or my profession.

Janet Toews Berg is a psychiatrist in private practice and attends Seattle Mennonite Church.

Children are people, too

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Denise Preller is director of God's Little Acre Preschool at North Danvers Mennonite Church, Danvers, Ill., where she is a member.

Invisible people

Let children's questions lead you to God's kingdom.

Denise Preller

"Mommy! Mommy!" 3-year-old Johnny calls out, "Look at that man. What's wrong with him? Is he a monster?"

His mother whispers, "Johnny, don't be rude. Come on, let's leave the man alone."

We've all been there. Either when we were 3-year-old Johnny and our mother said, "Shhh," or when our own 3-year-old did the same thing to us. It can be very uncomfortable. Your cheeks grow hot. You sneak a glance at the person to see if they've heard.

"Come on, let's leave the man alone." This is where we sin. Johnny is not doing anything wrong. He is just being a normal, curious kid. Parents who hurry away and turn people who are disabled into invisible people are the ones who are sinning.

People with disabilities were anything but invisible in Jesus' world. The Bible is full of stories where Jesus notices, speaks to and heals those disabled (people who were blind, lame, mentally ill or spiritually ill).

The last decade has seen progress in making people who are disabled visible. It used to be that the only time a children's story or an illustration included a person with a disability was when the story or the picture was about that person. Otherwise, children or people with disabilities were not included; they were invisible.

Today, if you are watching, you can catch people with disabilities in advertising ranging from soft drink commercials to athletic wear. Children's books regularly include children and people with disabilities in illustrations, just as part of the crowd. Toy companies even market toys reflecting this trend. One bestseller at a large doll company is a wheelchair made for their dolls, and most of the customers buying it are not disabled themselves.

These public changes have helped make the invisible visible in our society, but that doesn't help much when faced with 3-year-old Johnny.

What do you do?

Here are some facts:

1. Children are curious.
2. We teach and encourage children to ask questions.
3. Noticing a person with a disability is natural.
4. Shushing a child teaches them that what they have said is wrong.
5. Because of the way we combine evil and ugliness in children's stories and movies, children are conditioned to think that something that looks different or strange is evil. They may need to be told that this person is a regular person, and just because they look different doesn't make them bad.
6. The person with a disability heard your child; don't pretend otherwise.
7. People with disabilities are aware that others, especially children, notice them.
8. Being treated as if you are invisible is painful.

Guidelines to use with children:

1. Never shush the child.
2. Answer any questions in clear, precise language. For example, "He is in a wheelchair because he cannot walk." "No, he is not a monster."

This next part will require courage:

3. Ask your child if he or she would like to meet the person they were asking questions about.
4. Take your child over to the person to be introduced.
5. Always speak to the one disabled, never ask the person they are with if it is all right to speak to them, unless the disabled person is a child.
6. Kneel or sit down at their level to talk to them.
7. Take the lead in the conversation until you are sure the disabled person is receptive. The conversation could go something like this:

"Excuse me, do you have a minute to talk?"

"This is Johnny and I'm his mother. He has noticed your cool wheelchair and was wondering if he could meet you?"

Most people with disabilities spend so much time being alternately stared at, then treated like they are invisible, that they will probably welcome being spoken to by Johnny. When Jesus spoke of coming to the kingdom of God as a child, this may be an example of what he had in mind. Children have a natural openness, ease and curiosity about life. Adults are the ones who erect the barriers, who do the shushing. We were told so long and so well about not staring, not being rude, that we don't even see people with disabilities anymore.

In the following story I in no way wish to imply that the color of your skin is a disability. But this is a good illustration of how the honesty and directness of children can lead us to the kingdom of God.

Once when my son was 3, we met an African-American man on an elevator. My son stared and pointed and asked questions: "What does that man have on his face to make it so dark?" I was embarrassed. I looked into the man's eyes and said, "I'm sorry. My son has never seen someone who looks like you before." The man knelt down, took my son's hand and placed it in his face. He said, "You see, it's the color of my skin. It doesn't come off." My son smiled and said, "I think it is neat." I felt humbled by this gracious man.

> ***My 3-year-old had made a personal connection with someone in a way I could never hope to do.***

I don't know what that man thought of us, the white lady with a child who didn't know any African-Americans. I do know that I felt disabled that day. My 3-year-old had made a personal connection with someone in a way I could never hope to do. When your child embarrasses you with questions about a person with disabilities, take a deep breath and look through your discomfort for the kingdom of God. Your children are leading you there.

THE
Mennonite

Men
Mennonite

October 28, 1997

Tenth Man on two fronts

Mennonite Men officers approved two Tenth Man church building grants for 1998. Awards are slated for urban Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, and rural Riverton (Man.) Fellowship Circle, in the Interlake region of Manitoba.

George Hatzfeld

Family times at Germantown

Germantown serves the city

The pages of Mennonite history books are littered with the stories of churches once established, that flourished and then died out.

One that barely escaped extinction was the Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, established by settlers who had arrived in 1683. By the mid-1960s the church had only a few loyal members. Then a stream of young adult Mennonites moved into the area, determined to continue Germantown's Christian Mennonite ideals with a new face and energy.

Their vital outreach led to a sizable increase in members and children which soon outgrew the old building. The historic structure became a museum with its special kind of witness.

Mennonite ideals with a new face

The Germantown congregation then purchased and occupied a larger facility nearby. Here they maintain a full ministry of worship, Christian nurture and outreach to people and families in the city. They participate in housing rehabilitation for poor

George Hatzfeld

Germantown Mennonite meetinghouse

RIVERTON FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

families. They maintain a strong peace witness.

While agreeing to pay most of the cost of their building themselves, they have asked for a $25,000 Tenth Man grant from Mennonite Men, which the officers approved. Meanwhile they must do extensive remodeling for this beautiful structure to serve its purposes of worship, nurture and Christian outreach.

Racial barriers fall in Riverton

A contrasting scene is the Riverton (Man.) Fellowship Circle, located in the rural Interlake area of central Manitoba. This congregation provides a Christian outreach to aboriginal and nearby Icelandic peoples.

Lying on the shores of vast Lake Winnipeg, Riverton Fellowship serves not only local residents but many travelers between the northern wilderness and urban Winnipeg.

The Fellowship Circle ministers to the whole person—emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. It addresses the many human needs in the community: addictions, parenting classes, various anxieties and domestic violence.

The congregation has a potluck meal after every worship service, so the kitchen is a central place. Decisions are often made during mealtime. A resource library is planned to upgrade the Christian education of members, children and seekers.

During the short summer season this year, church members and volunteers from elsewhere have been busy constructing the first meetinghouse for the Riverton group. Pastor Neill von Gunten writes that a bond has developed between Riverton and other North American congregations who have helped in construction. "And the common thread, of course," says Neill, "has been

Neill von Gunten

Riverton meetinghouse

Jesus Christ, our common Lord and Savior. Without the assurance of a Tenth Man grant, and a couple willing to loan us that amount until the grant becomes available later in 1998, we would have had to wait even longer before starting our church building project. Instead, we now look forward to even more exciting things happening within the Riverton Fellowship Circle and the community this winter—in our own building."

Mennonite Men plans to award a $30,000 grant to Riverton when funds are available.

Evaluating men's resources

Ten interested leaders gathered at the Winnipeg '97 conference to learn more about evaluating the various resources for men available today. They recognized the restlessness of people in our fast-changing society. They were aware of various solutions proclaimed in books, ads and rallies.

Seminar leader Heinz Janzen presented the following tests of trustworthiness for any approach: (1) The reign of God, (2) Jesus as Lord and Savior, (3) Life together in the church, the body of Christ, (4) Jesus Christ as the model man, (5) Respect for others, regardless of race, nationality, gender, age, wealth or education, (6) the necessity of both spirituality and service, inner and outer work.

Requests for this kind of information frequently come to the Mennonite Men office.

Neill von Gunten

Weekly Sunday potluck at Riverton

Inspiring time at Winnipeg '97

Frequent conferencegoers are inspired by our General Conference sessions with music, messages, reports and debates. This year's sessions began with a musical feast by the Canadian Mennonite Bible College choir and orchestra.

WE'RE
BUILDING
CHURCHES
Tenth
Man

The next evening, 195 men and 5 women gathered to feast on roast beef and all the fixings. They stayed for the business meeting of Mennonite Men led by president Harold Voth from Haven, Kan. Andy Funk, masonry contractor from Sanford, Man. led singing and presented several inspiring solos.

Treasurer Carl Thieszen of North Newton, Kan., presented his two-year report, including $90,500 U.S. in grants to three congregations. The new Tenth Man video, *Transmitting Our Heritage*, was shown. Pastor Neill von Gunten, Riverton (Man.) Fellowship Circle, told of the inspiration that came to his congregation when they learned that their Tenth Man grant was approved for funding. Their congregation has already begun building and hopes to be ready to move in before winter. The banquet offering totaled almost $1,000. Most of this will go into grants after conference expenses are paid.

First installment to Esperanza

Mennonite Men treasurer Carl Thieszen presented a $20,000 Tenth Man installment to the Comunidad de Esperanza (Community of Hope) Mennonite Church, Dallas, Texas, on Sept. 7. This was a firstfruits promise to complete their $32,000 grant by the end of the year.

The congregation now occupies an attractive and usable Christian meetinghouse. Generous gifts of labor by the congregation and the sponsoring Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan., have remodeled the building into an attractive and usable facility. Its outstanding spiritual and social ministries were featured in a major article in the July 6, 1996, *Dallas Morning News*. The Tenth Man grant enables this congregation of Hispanic newcomers to reduce its debt burden. Thieszen and consultant Heinz Janzen made the presentation in behalf of Mennonite Men and the hundreds of Tenth Man donors.

Am I a member?

"Every woman of this congregation is a member of the women's organization," jumped out at me from a church brochure.

What about the rest of the congregation? Each man and boy has gifts to offer; each has needs for ministry. Often this happens through a Mennonite Men group. Fathers need training in parenting, both for their sons and daughters. Men and boys retreats are popular and serve a good purpose. Work projects draw those with manual skills. Some men explore the meaning of manhood in our fast changing, confusing society.

—Heinz Janzen

© Olan Mills

Jim Gingerich will begin as coordinator of Mennonite Men on Jan. 2, 1998. His job will include handling the Tenth Man church building program.

Gingerich has pastored the First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, Kan. for 26 years. He has been vice-president of the General Conference and member of the Integration Committee.

Heinz Janzen, editor
Mennonite Men insert in *The Mennonite*
Published annually
P.O. Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
(316) 283-5100

Yes, I would like to help new Mennonite churches!

☐ I want to give $100 when called upon, up to twice a year, to help new Mennonite churches buy or build their first permanent meetinghouse. I understand I will be contacted when my contribution is needed.

☐ Enclosed is my contribution of $________________

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

Phone ____________________ Home congregation ______________________

Return this form to: Tenth Man, c/o Carl Thieszen, P.O. Box 61, North Newton, KS 67117 or Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

News

Committee considers potential cost of merger

Chicago—Is $480,000 too much? Too little? Where will the money come from? Who will raise it? And how do we tell the church?

These were among the many questions members of the Integration Committee (IC), meeting here Sept. 19-20, asked each other.

The IC got its first look at preliminary budget estimates for the cost of merger: perhaps $480,000 U.S., likely more. Among the big ticket items are an estimated $100,000 for legal services, $90,000 for communication and identity development, $85,000 for various meetings connected with merger, and $65,000 for the development of a new periodical to replace *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald*.

"I realize that we're building a church that stretches from Mexico to Canada, from the Pacific to the Atlantic," said Helmut Harder, Winnipeg, "but I still wouldn't want to tell my mother."

That is precisely who must be told, other committee members said. Ted Rempel, Edmonton, Alta., had it figured out: "It's only $2.50 per member of our two groups."

"Now's the time to start," Don Steelberg, Wichita, responded, pulling a dollar from his pocket.

Other committee members followed his example. "Does anyone have change?" said Mary Burkholder, Waterloo, Ont., waving a $10 bill.

"Will you accept a Canadian dollar on par?" asked Harder.

Delegate counsel: The committee also looked back on delegate responses from the GC special session in Winnipeg and MC General Assembly in Orlando, Fla., this past summer.

Donella Clemens, Souderton, Pa., noted that early on, the date for merger had been the subject of much discussion, with 2001 or later being suggested. "Then we put in 1999 [in the proposal to delegates], and there was hardly a whisper of reaction."

"And the constant voice I heard at both Winnipeg and Orlando was the desire people have for a strong voice in what the denomination does," she added.

"The only people who talked with me about integration with passion were those who are on current boards or staffs," reported Ruth Suter, San Francisco. "The rest of the people think we made the important decision in 1995."

Integration Consultation Group: Faced with the myriad details involved with bringing the MC and GC groups together, the IC decided to get help. They agreed to form what will be called an Integration Consultation Group (ICG), which will be responsible to find experts in various areas—such as legal, financial and human resources—as the need arises.

Appointed to the ICG were George Stoltzfus and Miriam Book of the MC General Board staff, Jim Schrag of the General Conference General Board staff and Harder of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada staff. Joining them will be Gordon Epp-Fransen, CMC treasurer; Ted Stuckey, GC treasurer, and Karl Sommers, corporate planning vice president for Mennonite Mutual Aid. *J. Lorne Peachey*

Franconia expels Germantown

Philadelphia—In an Oct. 14 meeting here marked by civility and anger, historic significance and drama, the Germantown Mennonite congregation learned that it had been expelled from Franconia Mennonite Conference of the Mennonite Church.

Before the meeting ended, a member of the congregation asked Franconia Conference moderator Donella Clemens to escort him outside, and the pastor of the congregation made the same request of conference minister Jim Lapp, as symbolic gestures.

Delegates voted "yes," 178-40, by mail-in ballot, to a proposal recommended by the conference council executive committee. The action proposed that "Franconia Mennonite Conference no longer recognize Germantown Mennonite Church as a member congregation, that the conference send credentials for the pastors serving Germantown to the congrega-

Inside the news

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Palestinians attend peace building institute / p. 16

Mennonite Women appoints staff, sets office / p. 17

Hereford Mennonite Church, Bally, Pa., held a homecoming and centennial celebration Sept. 28 to Oct. 26 with a series of special Sunday services. The Hereford Church began in 1847, 150 years ago; the present sanctuary was built in 1897.

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The 20th annual Indiana Mennonite Softball Tournament, held over Labor Day weekend, raised $3,000 for Mennonite Central Committee. The tournament drew 64 men's and 13 women's teams from eight states and Canada. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

• • •

The 1997 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and its coordinator Jody Williams. Mennonite Central Committee is one of some 1,000 organizations in the Campaign coalition, which seeks to ban the production, stockpiling, sale and use of anti-personnel mines. In Laos, MCC has worked to clean up cluster bombs, a subcategory of anti-personnel weapons. A treaty banning anti-personnel land mines was adopted in Oslo, Norway, on Sept. 18 after three weeks of international negotiations. In December, more than 100 countries, including Canada, are expected to sign the treaty. The United States, however, has indicated it will not sign. MCC supporters are encouraged to call the White House at (202) 456-1111 to urge the Clinton administration to sign the treaty.

Mennonite Disaster Service needs help at the following locations:

- **College Station, Ark.—Volunteers are needed to rebuild and repair tornado-damaged homes. Call (501) 490-1757.**
- **Detroit, Mich.—Volunteers are needed to repair roof damage after July 3 tornadoes. Others needed include crew leaders and cooks. For information call (313) 964-2856.**
- **Midvale, Idaho—Volunteers are needed for spring flood clean-up. Call Ray Funk at (208) 939-3232.**
- **Yuba City, Calif.—Volunteers are needed for October through December. Call (916) 741-0526.**
- **Winnipeg—Skilled carpenters are needed to finish home rebuilding before winter. Call (204) 261-6381.**

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After only two weeks as a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker, Nathan Bender was hit by a car while crossing Connecticut Avenue in Washington. Just before 3 p.m. on Sept. 30, Bender went to a copy shop. As he stepped out from behind a bus and into the street, Bender saw a car to his left. "I remember hitting something on the car and remember next lying on my face on the pavement," says the 23-year-old native of Breslau, Ont. Immediately, 30-year-old Kristin Stover, the driver of the car that hit Bender, came to him. "I remember her saying, 'I'm so sorry. I didn't see you,'" he says. "I told her, 'It's not your fault, ma'am. I didn't look where I was going.'" Bender suffered a concussion, a dislocated shoulder with a possible small break in the upper bone in his arm and a severe cut to his elbow. He received a citation for jaywalking from the District of Columbia police department in the incident. About his fellow MVSers, Bender says, "I've only known these people for less than a month, and they've been so supportive, I can't think of anything they wouldn't do to help me and that feels pretty good."

tion, and that no overseer be appointed for them."

The action takes effect Jan. 1, 1998. Richard Lichty currently serves as interim pastor at Germantown.

Germantown was reduced to associate member (nonvoting) status in the conference in 1995. A straw vote taken at last April's Franconia annual assembly failed to produce enough votes to bring the question of Germantown's continuing status to the floor, which in effect extended Germantown's associate membership.

After this "vote not to vote," 10 congregations drafted letters to conference leaders expressing concern about the lack of definitive action. Members of the conference Executive Committee have since met with Franconia pastors and overseers, Germantown members and a group that supported a "third way" between expelling and fully restoring Germantown.

Germantown is the oldest continuous Mennonite congregation in North America, dating to 1683. It is also affiliated with Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonite Church, of which it remains a member.

Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan., also faces a late October mail-in ballot vote over its acceptance of homosexual members. However, this was a mutual decision of conference and congregation, unlike the case of Germantown.

Following the announcement of the congregation's expulsion, Ken White, a gay Germantown member, challenged Clemens to take responsibility for conference actions by walking him to the door to "cast [him] out of the Mennonite Church and the body of Christ." Clemens objected, but after some congregants said that it was important for conference leaders to own their actions, she accompanied White to the door, saying that she did so "as a representative of the … delegates" who had voted for expulsion.

Lichty then asked Lapp to take him to the door as a sign of the denomination's return of Lichty's pastoral credentials. Lapp also balked at the request, but after an extended discussion walked Lichty to the door. Several members of the congregation wept as White and Lichty were led out.

Lapp and Clemens then left the meeting, while the congregation continued to discuss the evening's events, closing with hymn-singing.

Lichty rejoined the group, but White would not re-enter the tiny, historic sanctuary where the meeting had taken place. He sat outside, accepting hugs from exiting Germantowners. Some said that they had wanted to come out and bring him back "in from exile." "I like it out here," White said. "I like it out here just fine." *Melanie A. Zuercher from reports by Mary Lou Cummings, George Hatzfeld and John Linscheid*

Maternity leave challenges churches

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Family leave, maternity leave, paternity leave. The U.S. government mandates it for businesses with 50 employees or more—part of the Family and Medical Leave Act gives eligible employees up to 12 weeks within a 12-month period for the birth, adoption or foster-care placement of a child. But what are congregations and denominations doing to nurture and support new families when the mother is the pastor?

Neither the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) nor the Western District Conference, both with headquarters in central Kansas, has an official maternity leave policy for pastors.

"We don't have a policy that is spelled out," says Marv Zehr, Western District conference minister. "We're not in a position to set a policy, but we help with the process and we encourage the establishment of a policy for individual churches.

"This is an area that is still fairly new for all of us. As we're getting more and more women in ministry, that becomes more and more of an issue. It's a difficult thing to know how far to push churches for adherence to strict guidelines because it may discourage them from hiring women pastors. On the other hand, we also want to be up front and be fair to women who need to have that time off. So it's a fine line."

Sometimes that fine line becomes a dividing line. There's often disagreement among church members, with some lining up for a minimum of time off for the pastor and others wanting to make a statement for the ideal that would model what is most healthy, holistic and family-centered.

Faith Mennonite Church in Newton recently put together a maternity policy for their associate and youth pastor Vicki Penner, whose first child was born Sept. 24. LaVonda Claassen was a member of the committee assigned by the deacon board to formulate a policy.

"There was a lot of disagreement in the board about it," says Claassen. "The policy we came up with was pretty much a compromise. The process we used was to look at local institutions—Bethel College, hospitals—and to check with the General Conference and the Western District to see if there was a policy."

The committee also checked with two other denominations in Newton, she says.

The committee proposed adding 15 days of maternity leave to Penner's 15 days of annual sick leave for the first six weeks and to allow Penner to have the baby in the office (not more than half-time) for the next six weeks. The church's deacon board accepted this "with a great deal of discussion," Claassen says.

Cutting edge: "It's interesting that people are on both sides of the spectrum," she says. "We kept reminding ourselves that the church needs to be on the cutting edge of some of these things, particularly where women in ministry are concerned. We kept reminding ourselves that we are setting a precedent here."

The deacon board also decided to write letters to the General Conference and Western District offices strongly recommending that both of them draw up some maternity leave guidelines for churches, Claassen says. This has helped prompt John Esau, GC director of ministerial leadership, to draw up some proposed guidelines, which he hopes can be implemented by 1999.

Meanwhile, Penner says she's pleased with the leave policy her church established. "It's better than I proposed. I'm happy with what I have within the climate that we're in, and I'm really pleased with my deacon board, who took initiative to be more generous than I felt I asked for.

"But I think it would be good for the conference to look at what is really ideal, to have someone look conscientiously at what is helpful for family life and how we can model family life with children. It would be good to have a maternity leave of four to six weeks on top of sick leave and not have to use that time. I know in other countries, like Canada, and also in Europe, there is just more flexibility in time off."

In Canada, for example, federal law requires employers (including churches) to provide 15 weeks of maternity leave. The government pays the woman's salary during the leave at a reduced rate of approximately 65 to 70 percent; employers must continue to pay full benefits. An additional 10 weeks of parental leave is available, also paid by the government at the reduced rate. Parents can split this additional time between themselves, or one or the other can take the entire 10 weeks leave.

As more and more women take on leadership roles within the General Conference Mennonite Church, members will continue to struggle with policies that relate to families.

"I think another whole issue related to this is how we nurture pastors' families beyond just infancy," says Janeen Bertsche Johnson, former associate pastor at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan., and now community life minister at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Johnson was a pastor at Lorraine Avenue during the births of both her children, Hannah, now 5, and Aaron,

continued on page 17

Melanie Zuercher

Baby on board: *Sophia Penner Minder gets used to a new environment. Vicki Penner, associate and youth pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., plans to take the baby to work with her when she returns from her maternity leave in early November.*

The U.S. House of Representatives voted 217-210 to reject an amendment to the foreign operations spending bill for 1998 that would have cut funding to the U.S. Army School of the Americas. Yet the close vote on Sept. 4 , says Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II , gives a strong signal that the school's "days are numbered. We came within inches of shutting down this Cold War relic and putting to rest one of the more shameful institutions in this country." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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Bluffton (Ohio) College held a memorial service Sept. 28 for three students who died during the summer. Teresa Grothouse, 43, died Aug. 13 three weeks after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Andy Lehman, 23, who graduated in May, was killed in a work-related accident Sept. 2. Sophomore Tim Suter, 20, died Aug. 13 in a truck accident. The memorial service was organized by Bluffton campus pastors Randy Keeler and Nan Beyeler. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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The 13th annual quilt sale for the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, held Sept. 13, brought in $28,000 for the school. Quilters and craftspeople throughout the United States and Canada contributed items for the sale. On Oct. 18, CMLC held a program of rededication for its recently remodeled facility. CMLC is a kindergarten through grade eight school that provides a safe, quality education in a Christian setting, with special emphasis on peacemaking and conflict resolution. It is sponsored by the Chicago area Mennonite churches, Central District Conference, Illinois Conference and other Mennonite congregations.

Jamie Stuart, an elder in the Church of Scotland, has written a Glasgow version of the Bible. In it the Ten Commandments read, "Serve me an me alane. Take nae heed o ither idols. Honour ma name—aye—respect the name of the Lord, yer God. Nae working oan the Sabbath. Love yer faither an mither. Nae murderin. Nae thievin. Nae lyin. Stick fast tae yer ain partner. Nae greedy habits." Ministers of the Church of Scotland are allowed to use this version of the Bible in worship services. (*Presbyterian Record*)

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The Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund invites applications for study/work projects that further Epp's vision for mission in Canada and throughout the world. The fund supports projects dealing with history, peacemaking (particularly in the Middle East), Mennonite ecumenicity and the Christian faith. Preference is given to Mennonites and Brethren in Christ who study or work in Canada. Applications are due Nov. 15 and are available from Sam Steiner, Administrator, Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6.

* * *

Christian Peacemaker Teams plans delegations to Chiapas, Mexico, Nov. 28-Dec. 9, and to the Middle East, Feb. 8-20, 1998. In the West Bank, CPT-Rebuilders Against Bulldozers teams have been invited by local supporters to meet with and document the cases of families who are dealing with house demolitions in the greater Hebron area. Team members will attend a conference in Jerusalem and tour the area. In Chiapas, delegation members will learn about the conflict there and meet with villagers facing ongoing violence and harassment from soldiers. For more information, contact CPT, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 455-1199, fax (312) 666-2677, or e-mail cpt@igc.org.

Let the children come

Markham, Ill.—What was originally scheduled as a child dedication service for Danielle Wilson, born May 9 to Darnell and Tanya Wilson of Community Mennonite Church here, became an event for the whole congregation at which 27 children were dedicated.

Community Mennonite is made up of people from a variety of backgrounds, many of them unfamiliar with the concept of child dedication. When co-pastors Chuck and Bonnie Neufeld explained that it was a commitment that parents make to God to raise their children as faithful followers of Christ, other parents began asking to dedicate their children as well.

The Aug. 31 service included single-parent, two-parent, adoptive and foster families and children ranging in age from 4 months to 15 years. Each child received a certificate of dedication and a wristband with the inscription "WWJD" ("What Would Jesus Do?").

Palestinians attend peace-building institute

Winnipeg (MCC)—For Palestinians, working at peace building through nonviolence is not an easy choice these days.

Nonetheless, two Palestinians, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, attended a conflict transformation training this summer at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va.

Saliba Tawil and Lourdes Habash are now back in Palestine after completing courses in religion and conflict resolution, designs for training in conflict resolution, intermediary skills and foundations for international peacemaking.

"To be committed to peace is difficult in our situation," says Habash. "For instance, every day the Israelis demolish Palestinian homes in some area. So to say we will face their power and domination with peaceful means is difficult. But my experience at EMU helped me realize that this maybe will happen, and that we must work very hard to achieve this."

While at EMU, Habash met people from Lebanon, Kenya, the United States and elsewhere. "It was significant to meet people from all over the world who are struggling against injustice. We [Palestinians] are not alone."

Habash currently volunteers at Wi'am Palestinian Center for Conflict Resolution, in Bethlehem, as coordinator of a project on peer mediation in schools with Search for Common Ground, an international nongovernmental organization in Gaza.

Tawil, a high school biology teacher by profession, serves as a volunteer mediator at Wi'am. He works with others at the center to blend traditional Palestinian mediation practices with Western techniques to respond effectively to disputes. *Carmen Pauls*

Mennonite Women appoints staff, sets office

Newton, Kan. (GCMC/MC)—Now officially merged, the new Mennonite women's organization has announced some staffing and structure decisions.

Members of the General Conference Mennonite Church's Women in Mission (WM) and the Mennonite Church's Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC) voted this summer to integrate into one organization, called Mennonite Women, as of Aug. 1.

Beginning Oct. 15, Lara Hall and Susan Jantzen will share the full-time position of executive coordinator for Mennonite Women. Hall was previously executive secretary for WMSC and Jantzen the coordinator for WM.

The office for Mennonite Women will be at "GC headquarters" in Newton, previously the location of the WM office, from which Jantzen and Doris Schmidt, support staff, will work. Hall will be located in Elkhart, Ind., through December, and afterward in Scottdale, Pa.

Hall

Jantzen

Hockman-Wert

Elizabeth Klassen, Kitchener, Ont., head of the four-member search committee that has been working on staff placements, says, "Lara and Susan are both gifted women, committed to living out their faith in a variety of ways. Their enthusiasm and strong leadership will help us strengthen our vision for Mennonite Women. I am very excited about them sharing the role of coordinator."

Joy Hess, Goshen, Ind., newly elected president of Mennonite Women, adds, "Both bring strong skills. They complement each other. They have shown that they can work together. They're both open to new initiatives but are also interested in continuing to relate to the traditional members."

In addition to the executive coordinators, Cathleen Hockman-Wert has been named editor of the new, merged publication, to replace WM's *Window to Mission* (edited by Bek Linsenmeyer) and the *WMSC Voice* (edited by Eve MacMaster).

Hockman-Wert began her assignment Sept. 15, although the new magazine, as yet untitled, is not expected to begin until November.

Hockman-Wert lives in Eugene, Ore., where she recently completed her M.A. in communication and journalism from the University of Oregon. She brings four years of editorial experience, including three as assistant editor of *Gospel Herald*, to the position.

Hockman-Wert notes that "this is probably the first time in Mennonite history that this kind of arrangement—to have a magazine edited so far from Mennonite hubs—could work." She will communicate with the co-executive coordinators "mostly by e-mail" and work with a designer, yet to be named but likely to be in a different state, by phone, fax and e-mail. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Maternity leave

continued from page 15

2 1/2. "The policy arranged for me was that I could use my sick leave as maternity leave," Johnson says. "I got one day of paid leave for each month I had served, up to 30 days."

Johnson ended up spreading out her days. "I'd take a few days off, then go back to work. That way I gave myself a little more time. I took Hannah to work with me for eight months."

Many churches haven't had to deal with these issues yet, but "it's something that's probably going to become more and more of an issue, I would imagine," Johnson says.

Johnson and her family now attend a church (Eighth Street Mennonite in Goshen, Ind.) that called her for advice when they began to investigate a maternity leave policy for their associate pastor, Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau.

"Their committee used a lot of the ideas from Lorraine Avenue to work out her maternity leave," Johnson says. "It's nice to be in a church that's willing to do that; I value that in participating here, as well, that they care for the needs of our children." *Cynthia Snider*

"Follow the Lamb," studies from the Book of Revelation, is the theme of the annual Inter-Mennonite Inspirational Conference Nov. 8 at the Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill. J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., will look at Revelation as it appeared to first-century Christians. Other presenters include Edwin J. Stalter and Richard Blackburn. For information contact the church at (309) 452-6622.

• • •

Camp Mennoscah, the Western District Conference camp near Murdock, Kan., began celebrating its 50th anniversary with a benefit auction on Sept. 10. The auction raised $3,250, which will be used to renovate the bath houses and build a new cabin. A record 552 campers attended this year. Additional anniversary celebrations are planned for next year, including a festival on April 4. A history of the camp and a cookbook of camp menus will be sold. (Harold Jackson, *Mennonite Weekly Review*)

• • •

A band calling itself the Electric Amish got its start playing at the Tipton County (Ind.) Pork Festival several years ago. The members, all non-Amish, dressed like Amishmen for the pork festival queen pageant. Later the band added parodies of rock songs in addition to their Amish clothing. "He's from Goshen" is a parody of Aerosmith's "Sweet Emotion." "Graeber Be Good" and "Come Together (And Build a Barn)" are other tunes. Although some have decried the group's parodies, band member Dean Metcalf says reports from Amish folk are positive. The band has one of the few Amish web sites. You can hear parts of songs and other band information at http://electricamish.com. (*MennoNot*)

Record

AIMM—Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
AMBS—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
COM—Commission on Overseas Mission
MBM—Mennonite Board of Missions
MVS—Mennonite Voluntary Service

China represents one of the world's largest unreached people groups. At the same time, the Chinese church has grown to an estimated 60 million members, reports EPNS. Hay-Chun Maak of the Chinese Coordination Center of World Evangelism believes the Chinese church could be one of the greatest mission forces in the 21st century, with as many as 100,000 missionaries by 2025. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

• • •

Youth in the United States are 12 times more likely to be killed by gunfire than teens in the rest of the industrialized world, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The homicide rate for U.S. children is 2.57 out of 100,000 compared with 0.51 in 25 other countries, reports Youthworker Update, while the suicide rate is 0.55 out of 100,000, compared with 0.27 in other countries. Accidental death rate by gunfire is 1.66 out of 100,000, compared with 0.14 in other countries. Murder rates have tripled in the last 50 years; suicide rates have quadrupled among children under age 15. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

• • •

A shopkeeper who sold food to a jobless woman in Kabul, Afghanistan, was beaten and jailed for violating Islamic law, reports EPNS. The Taliban faction, now ruling two-thirds of the country, has imposed a strict version of Islamic law, forbidding any interaction between men and women who are not related. Edicts include barring women from work or school; banning paper bags (because the Koran could be written on them, then destroyed); banning kite-flying because the activity might interfere with prayers; playing soccer, and listening to music. Many Islamic activists have denounced the Taliban's decrees and restrictions against women. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

DEATHS

Archie Graber, who served with AIMM in Congo/Zaire for 43 years, died Aug. 31 in Archbold, Ohio, at age 96. Graber first went to Congo in 1930 and retired from AIMM in 1973. He was a carpenter and relief worker and was described as a "super" evangelist. Graber was a member of Archbold Evangelical Mennonite Church.

Dorothy Schwartz, COM and AIMM worker, Carlock (Ill.) Church, died Aug. 31 at age 79. She and Merle, her husband, served in Congo/Zaire 1942-1977. On their way to Congo during World War II, the Schwartzes were on a boat that was torpedoed and sunk. Friends and relatives in the United States, believing them dead, were planning memorial services when word came that the couple had been rescued. When the medical compound in Mukedi where they worked was destroyed during the rebellion in the '60s, the Schwartzes did not give up but helped to rebuild the facilities.

MINISTERS

Eleanor Beachy will be interim pastor at First Church, Moundridge, Kan., beginning Jan. 1, 1998.

Jeff Borg will be half-time pastor of Fort Collins (Colo.) Church beginning Nov. 2.

Eric Buller was licensed and installed as pastor at First Church, Ransom, Kan., Sept. 28.

Jim Gingerich will retire from pastoring First Church, Moundridge, Kan., Dec. 31.

David Keim is associate pastor at First Church, Newton, Kan.

Cleo Koop is pastor of First Church, Halstead, Kan.

Dorothea Janzen is interim pastor at Alexanderwohl Church, Goessel, Kan.

Amelia and **Newton Old Crow** have resigned as pastors at Zion Church, Canton, Okla., and Mennonite Indian Church, Seiling, Okla.

Debbie Schmidt was ordained as pastor at First Church, Hutchinson, Kan., Sept. 21.

Terry Zehr has resigned as pastor at West Zion Church, Moundridge, Kan., effective in November. He will be pastor at Sunnyside Church, Elkhart, Ind.

WORKERS

Heiko Adams, Reckershausen, Germany, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 8 as a carpenter's assistant for Mennonite Housing, Wichita, Kan.

Abe and **Chris Buhler**, Burns Lake, B.C., are serving a three-year COM term in Recife, Brazil, working with leadership training and coordinating theological education.

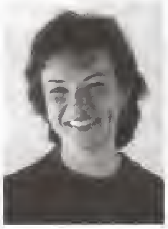
Gloria and **Ron Camp**, Calvary Church, Aurora, Ore., have begun a one-year AIMM term in Burkina Faso, teaching missionary children.

Kathleen and **Sam Coffman**, Hawkesville (Ont.) Church, began two-year MVS terms

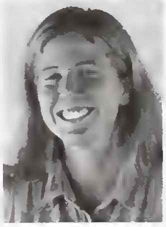
Adams

A. Buhler

C. Buhler


K. Coffman

S. Coffman


Detwiler

Dyck

June 15 at Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz.; Kathleen as a teacher, Sam as a maintenance worker.

Amy Detwiler, First Church, Bluffton, Ohio, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 26 as a mediator in Fresno, Calif.

Angela Dyck, North Kildonan Church, Winnipeg, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as an office assistant for Interfaith Housing, Hutchinson, Kan.

Joanna Eash, Carlsbad (N.M.) Church, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as a nurse in Boulder, Colo.

Harold Enns, Sargent Avenue Church, Winnipeg, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as a teacher at Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

Natasha Ens, Saskatoon, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as an assistant teacher at Friendship Day Care Center in Hutchinson, Kan.

Christa Eshleman, Salem (Ore.) Church, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as a project assistant intern for Volunteer Legal Services Program in San Francisco.

Barbara Hahm, Dessau, Germany, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as an information and referral counselor for Downtown Emergency Service Center in Seattle.

Eash

Karen Heinold, Kouts, Ind., began a two-year MVS term June 19 as a case manager with Elderhealth Northwest in Seattle.

Kyle Hunsberger, Blooming Glen Church, Telford, Pa., began a one-year MVS term March 17 as a carpenter's assistant with Habitat for Humanity, St. Louis.

Gary and **Jean Isaac**, COM/AIMM workers, returned from South Africa to Newton, Kan., on North America Assignment until January 1998.

Colleen Janzen, Springridge Church, Pincher Creek, Alta., began a one-year MVS term May 2 as a community outreach/administrative assistant for the Humane Society of Boulder, Colo.

Bonnie Klassen, Kitchener, Ont., has begun a three-year COM/MBM Overseas Mission Volunteer term as an administrative assistant with JustaPaz in Bogota, Colombia.

Hilda Marshall, Rainbow Church, Kansas City, Kan., began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as a work camp assistant for Youth Service Opportunities Project in New York City.

Anita and **Mel Penner**, Olivet Church, Abbotsford, B.C., have begun a three-year COM/MBM term in Mongolia.

William H. Stauffer, Stone Creek, Ohio, General Conference pastor and conservationist, received the Bluffton (Ohio) College Alumni Distinguished Service Award.

Burton Yost, emeritus professor of religion, received the Bluffton (Ohio) College Service Award.

Diane Zaerr, pastor at First Church, Iowa City, Iowa, has been appointed associate dean for continuing education and external programs at AMBS, beginning in early 1998. She will be responsible for overseeing the continuing education program of AMBS and will be a resource to Conference-based Theological Education programs.

Enns

Ens

Eshleman

Hahm

Heinold

Hunsberger

Janzen

Klassen

Marshall

Zaerr

Who you gonna call? Floodbusters! Mennonite Central Committee devised a way to help clean up after the southern Manitoba floods and create summer jobs for young people. The project, called Floodbusters, employed 60 young people, ages 18 to 25, who worked under Mennonite Disaster Service direction for $6.50 an hour. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

• • •

Manitoba Mennonite Women met for an enrichment day Sept. 13 at Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church. Projects for the year include developing a brochure for students studying in Winnipeg, a young adult ministry library, and a counselor training program at the Winnipeg Chinese Mennonite Church. Next year the women will support pastor Luc Tran of the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. *Elizabeth Abrahams*

• • •

The Mennonite Central Committee U.S. board executive committee, which met in Akron, Pa., Sept. 19-20, proposes that three of its four program areas, while remaining under the broad oversight of MCC U.S., become more directly accountable to MCC U.S. regional boards. Constituency Ministries (materials and fundraising) would move from MCC U.S. to be jointly supervised by the executives of MCC U.S., MCC Canada and MCC binational. Community Ministries, which oversees service programs in the United States, and Peace and Justice Ministries would both see significant staff reductions at the national office so that staff could be added to regional offices to oversee work in the regions. The Washington Office would remain under MCC U.S. oversight. Staff expressed hesitation with downsizing at the national level. "I'm not saying [peace and justice programming] can't be done in the regions, but it's not a sure thing," says Iris de Leon Hartshorn, director of Peace and Justice Ministries. "If we [at the national office] only have two programs, how do we resource [the regions]? Which programs will we keep?" *Larry Penner*

The **Leamington** (Ont.) **United Mennonite Home and Apartments** has an opening for a **chaplain**. Functioning as an integral member of the home's management team, this part-time position offers the opportunity to develop, implement and evaluate programs to provide spiritual care to seniors within our complex.

If you meet expectations for ministry within the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada guidelines and are interested in this exciting opportunity, please send your resume to **Jean Marie Drummond, Administrator, The Leamington United Mennonite Home and Apartments, 22 Garrison Ave., Leamington, ON N8H 2P2.**

New position available: Full-time integrated position as **conference youth minister** for Western District and South Central conferences, located in North Newton, Kan. Involves ministry and relationships with youth leaders in 120 congregations in seven states. Qualifications include Christ-centered relationship; previous experience in youth ministry; leadership ability; good administrative, organizational and communication skills; high degree of initiative; passion for youth and ability to travel. M.Div. preferred, or a willingness to work toward that degree. Compensation consistent with MC/GC pastor salary guidelines. Complete job description available.

For more information, or to submit an application (including three references) **by Nov. 10**, contact **WDC/SCC Conference Administrator, P.O. Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117; (316) 283-6300**; e-mail **billz@southwind.net.**

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Bluffton College announces a full-time, tenure track position in **education** beginning September 1998. Rank dependent on qualifications; doctorate required. The successful candidate will hold an advanced degree in elementary education; evidence of effective teaching crucial and graduate-level teaching preferred. Responsibilities include teaching graduate and undergraduate education courses in foundation, curriculum methods, classroom management and educational research as well as placement and supervision of student teachers. Consideration of applications begins Dec. 5 and continues until an appointment is made. Additional information at **www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.**

Send letter of interest, resume or vita, three letters of reference and official transcripts to **Amy Tabler, Assistant to the VP and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, Ohio 45817-1196.** EOE

Vice president, Samaritan Health Services; Administrator, Lebanon Community Hospital (LCH), Lebanon, Ore. Responsibilities include liaison of SHS executive council for LCH operation; lead staff in LCH management, policy and operations; planning and annual budget; uphold mission and purpose; relationships with medical staff and various publics. Master's degree in hospital or health administration, business administration, public health or related field required. Candidate should excel in effective and efficient management of hospital operations and administration, problem-solving, communication and interpersonal skills. Five years experience in a JCAHO-accredited acute-care U.S. hospital preferred. LCH has an annual budget of $34.5 million and employs 500 FTE people. LCH provides medical services in Linn County and is a subsidiary of Samaritan Health Services, Inc.

Qualified candidates submit resume to **Connie Erwin, Human Resource Department, Lebanon Community Hospital, P.O. Box 739, Lebanon, OR 97355-0739.**

Mennonite Mutual Aid has an excellent opportunity for a proven investment professional. We are seeking a **client services manager of investment products** to lead strategic marketing planning for our rapidly growing investment services area. Our selected candidate will also coordinate planning for all investment management sales and handle client relationships. Assisting MMA investment portfolio managers in the selection of securities and in asset allocation to help meet client objectives is also an important job component.

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Bluffton College announces a full-time, **chief librarian** position beginning September 1998. Responsibilities include leadership and coordination of planning, budgeting, managing the collections and staffing of Musselman Library, including the Mennonite Historical Library and the college archives, as well as other collections on campus. The position involves directing ongoing efforts to advance and integrate the use of technology, representing library matters to administration, serving as liaison with library publics and interacting effectively with faculty and others in promoting the mission of the library. Graduate degree from an ALA-accredited program required; Ph.D. preferred. Administrative and supervisory experience in an academic setting expected. Position has all the rights and privileges of other faculty members except tenure. Consideration of applications begins Dec. 5, and continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at **http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.**

Submit letter of application, resume or vita, three letters of reference and official transcripts to **Amy Tabler, Assistant to the VP and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.** EOE

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Flatrock Mennonite Church, an established rural congregation located in Flatrock, B.C., 30 miles east of Fort St. John, is seeking a **pastor.** Position open immediately.

Send resume to **Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Brad Giesbrecht, Box 179, Cecil Lake, BC V0C 1G0; (250) 781-3580.**

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applications for the position of **director of food, grants and material resources.** This is a full-time position based in Winnipeg, Man. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants should have previous overseas development experience, basic understanding of MCC's international programs and willingness to travel both internationally and domestically.

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact **Marsha Jones** or **Marv Frey at MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg MB, R3E 5K9; (204) 261-6381;** e-mail **prs@mennonitecc.ca.** Application deadline is **Nov. 15.**

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan., a large, active congregation serving a rural community, seeks **full-time lead pastor** with a commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, passion for the gospel and vision for outreach. Experience in leadership/administration beneficial.

Applicants are invited to submit resume and request for information to **Karl Brubaker, Pastoral Search Team, P.O. Box 71, Goessel, KS 67053; (316) 327-8216;** e-mail **karlb@hesston.edu.**

Tabor Mennonite Church, rural Newton, Kan., invites application for our newly open **co-pastoral team ministry** position. It is our sense that God is calling a co-pastoral team to our congregation because of our previous success with this model and the ability of co-pastors to blend family and professional goals in this 1.25 FTE position. We are committed to the Anabaptist vision of the power of a congregation of adult believers relating to our community in peace, hope and care for all.

Please contact **Bill Unruh, (316) 367-2411** or **Ray Frey (316) 367-8304,** co-chairs, for further details.

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Reviews

BOOKS

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God *by Gordon D. Fee (Hendrickson Publishers, 1996, 208 pages, $12.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Jacob W. Elias, Elkhart, Ind.

This book is Fee's third disciplined attempt to deal with the theme of the Holy Spirit in the writings of Paul. An article on the Spirit in the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Zondervan, 1988) could not say everything that needed to be said, so Fee began writing an expanded version of the article. The result was the 967-page *God's Empowering Presence* (Hendrickson, 1994). Fee agreed to try again, this time to attempt to make his expositions and theological reflections available to a wider audience.

In *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, Fee, professor of New Testament at Regent College, Vancouver, invites believers to experience the empowering presence of God's Spirit in their lives. He views the work of the Spirit primarily within the life of the congregation rather than mostly at the level of the individual. When the congregation gathers to worship God, the Spirit moves within the body of Christ, empowering its members for witness and holy living.

A book about the Holy Spirit written by a Pentecostal scholar might be expected to be too charismatic for Mennonites, but I find Fee's book to be charismatic in a sense that I can affirm. His treatment of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is stimulating, renewing and challenging, especially for Mennonites who at times appear rational and self-sufficient in their life of faith.

I suspect that some of Fee's Pentecostal readers will find his book problematic, however. For example, discussion of speaking in tongues is postponed until the second to last chapter of the book. Even there he suggests caution lest the faddish pursuit of spectacular gifts crowd out the humble desire of the church to be a channel of God's liberating grace and peace in a hurting and needy world.

This book addresses the ignorance of many mainline believers (including Mennonites) concerning the Spirit's "gracious gifting," which is available to the church. It also confronts the excesses that sometimes surface in revivalist circles. In Mennonite small groups and Sunday school classes, this book could become a tool for genuine renewal of worship, holy living and joyous witness.

RECLAIMING ZECHARIAH

The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes. Volume VII: Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature: Daniel, The Twelve Prophets. "The Book of Zechariah: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections" *by Ben C. Ollenburger (Abingdon, 1996, $55 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Lois Nickel, Winnipeg

Zechariah—not a book of the Bible many of us turn to often in our devotional life or even in our search for texts to preach and teach from. Does this prophet have a message for the contemporary church? Can his visions and oracles be interpreted with any amount of confidence by believers today? Ben Ollenburger wrestles with the difficult text of this book, bringing together the research of numerous other scholars and his own vast experience with the Hebrew Scriptures, to answer these questions.

The introduction to the commentary as a whole states that "the general aim of NIB is to bring the best in contemporary biblical scholarship into the service of the church to enhance preaching, teaching and study of the Scriptures." Ollenburger has certainly

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given the Christian community quality biblical scholarship and much thought-provoking interpretation to chew on. Through the set form of the commentary—short amounts of text presented in the NIV and NRSV, commentary verse by verse on the given section (the world behind and in the text) and reflections on each section, which bring the text into the context of the reader today—Ollenburger gives the biblical interpreter (meaning anyone who reads the text) the necessary sociohistorical background and careful literary comments, along with bold, fresh contemporary dialogue on the text. Woven throughout the commentary is Ollenburger's interpretation of Yahweh as creator—Yahweh calls and makes way for Jerusalem, Israel and all nations to be re-created into an inclusive, just and celebrative existence.

In the commentary section, Ollenburger tends toward some more difficult academic words. His work on the first eight chapters flows better and is easier to understand than with chapters 9 to 14. This is partly due to "second" Zechariah including some of the most difficult texts in Hebrew Scripture to translate and work with.

Zechariah is shown without a doubt to be interconnected with Isaiah, Haggai, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and other prophets. Ollenburger refers constantly to these other texts and integrates them into the text being commented on. For those seeking New Testament connections, he points the reader to traditional ties between Zechariah and the New Testament, as well as offering new angles to some tired views.

Resources

- **Two new Christmas outreach cards** designed for congregations to invite the community to Christmas services are now available. The cards are oversized postcards that can be imprinted with a personalized message. For free samples and current prices, call Mennonite Media at 1-800-999-3534.
- **Rhythms of Peace** is a 35-minute video with peacemaking stories and songs for children. Lee Eshleman of the "Ted & Lee" comedy team hosts the video as a teacher, "Mr. Fredd." A 28-page educator's study guide is included in the educational edition. For more information on the video and the two versions (educator's and home), call Mennonite Media at 1-800-999-3534.
- **Reflections on Training Caregivers in a Cross-Cultural Setting**, by Karl Bartsch, discusses Karl and Evelyn Bartsch's Mennonite Central Committee assignment in South Africa, where they trained trauma healing caregivers. The paper is available from MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151; $1 U.S./$1.25 Cdn. each. **Stress and Trauma Healing: A Manual for Caregivers** is also available from MCC for $20 U.S./$28 Cdn.
- **The 1998 imprint desk calendar** is now available from Mennonite Board of Missions' Mennonite Media. The calendar's theme is "Contentment is making a choice to live with joy." For a sample and order form call Mennonite Media at 1-800-999-3534.
- **Thrift Shops: No End in Sight** is an 18-minute video that gives a quick but in-depth look at how thrift shops work, who the customers are and how you can get involved. Available for $25 U.S./$30 Cdn. or free loan from Mennonite Central Committee, 21 S. 12th St., P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151; fax (717) 859-2171; or MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9; (204) 261-6381; fax (204) 269-9875, or your local MCC office.
- Mennonite Central Committee's **1997-98 Resource Catalog** lists new audiovisuals, posters, photo exhibits and printed materials about lifestyle, peacemaking, care of God's creation, mission of MCC and more. A youth section has been added. All audiovisuals and exhibits are available for free loan, with the cost of return shipping. Most printed materials are also free. For a free catalog, contact MCC, 21 S. 12th St., P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151; fax (717) 859-2171; or MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9; (204) 261-6381; fax (204) 269-9875, or your local MCC office.

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Editorial

Singing the blues

We all have abilities and disabilities, in one form or another. But until we acknowledge these, accept them, even welcome them, our wounds will continue to fester, and we will feel increasingly isolated from one another.

When we hurt or experience some limitation, we often feel alone. Others don't want to be around us. And if we're honest, we usually don't want to be around others who are hurting. A rampant attitude in our society says that if you're hurting or something bad has happened to you, then you must have done something wrong.

> *From the blues we can learn to express our pain, our disabilities, even when that expression sounds discordant.*

Such an attitude was prevalent in Jesus' time as well. In John 9, when the disciples encountered a man blind from birth, they asked Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" (verse 2). Jesus tells them to not look for blame but to see this as an occasion to see God at work. This man, who before seemed so helpless and dependent, becomes a powerful witness as he stands up to the intense questioning of the Pharisees.

Jesus not only opened this man's eyes; he opened the eyes of the disciples—and ours as well as we read the story—to see the world and suffering in a new way. The disciples had categorized this man as a sinner, unable to do any good. But it turned out that the man already had a great deal of courage and tenacity, which he demonstrated when he stood up to the Pharisees, who wanted to keep him in the category of outcast, disabled, not a part of the community.

Eugene Lowry, a homiletics professor who has written four books on preaching, is also a jazz pianist. He gave this year's Staley Lectures Oct. 10 and 13 at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan. He offered helpful insights into theology and music.

In one presentation he talked about "Jazz and Christianity" and demonstrated many of his points by performing on the piano. Jazz, he said, was born in the church. It grew out of the African-American church in the United States, where the call-and-response sermons and the cadence at the base of African music led to the formation of jazz.

African music, Lowry said, "is not frosting on a middle-class cake; it is a way of life." The black church brought together the pain of slavery and the grace of God revealed in Christ to create the music we call jazz.

Dissonant chords: In a second presentation, "The Theology of the Blues," Lowry showed that the blues, a subgenre of jazz, is a way to express our suffering. The dissonant chords reflect the trouble we experience in the world as well as express the yearning we feel for resolution.

The blues also evokes a coming together. The music involves not only joining various notes but involves bringing together various musicians. Jazz, like life, is improvisational, but it also requires musicians working together, responding to one another. It cannot be done in isolation.

Songs like "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" were written out of terrible struggle united with a strong faith. They express both the pain of life and the faith to bring those wounds to God.

From the blues we can learn to express our pain, our disabilities, even when that expression sounds discordant. We also learn to do this together, to not allow anyone among us to feel alone in their suffering but to embrace them and walk with them to the cross, where Jesus took on the pain of the world.

This movement leads to celebration. We must first name our disabilities, our troubles, our wounds, then watch our various abilities emerge and rejoice in what God has done—and is doing—among us. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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NOVEMBER 11, 1997

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Vancouver
a city on a hill

THE WORD FLESH

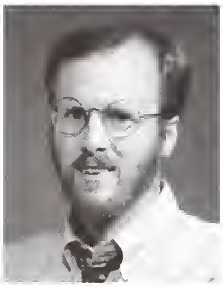
Prologue

Jesus said, "A city built on a hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14), and we don't intend to. Back in 1994, the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church began giving a grant each year to a designated "city on a hill." Each grant of $20,000 U.S. supports urban church work that models a holistic approach to the gospel, meeting people's physical and spiritual needs.

Assistant editor Melanie Zuercher traveled to Vancouver in September and spoke with members of various Mennonite churches working to meet people's physical and spiritual needs. The major part of this issue is devoted to the stories she wrote (pages 3-10).

Why commit so many pages to reporting this work? Because it's at the heart of our church's mission, to bring God's healing and hope to a hurting world. As you read these stories and meet the people involved in this work, pray for them and think about how you can be involved in such work, either in your own area or through gifts to the wider church.

Marlene Kropf (page 12) passes on the idea of a "prayer choir" that you may wish to consider.



There is plenty of good news in our news section, from a baptism in Congo (page 13) to thrift stores in Manitoba and peace teachers in Guatemala (page 15).

Consider giving a friend or family member *The Mennonite* for Christmas. We offer you a deal you can't refuse (see the ad on page 12). *gh*

Next issue: Thanksgiving for what?

Cover: Photo by Melanie A. Zuercher

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'The world is moving to our city'

Vancouver is a diverse City on a Hill.

Melanie A. Zuercher

Vancouver
a city
on a hill

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia comprise one of the fastest-growing urban areas in North America, if not the world. Yet many Vancouver-area Mennonite churches are seeing a decline in membership as people move to the suburbs.

David Chiu, director of evangelism and church development for the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia, says Mennonites must face the challenges of urban evangelism. An Angus Reid Poll survey taken in October 1996 shows British Columbia to have the highest unchurched/non-Christian population in North America.

B.C. Mennonites with a heart for evangelism and service at home received a boost from the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church, which awarded its fourth annual City on a Hill grant to the greater Vancouver area for 1997. Previous designees have been Denver (1996), Toronto (1995) and Fresno, Calif. (1994).

City on a Hill, which grants $20,000 U.S. annually, supports Mennonite urban church work that models a holistic approach to the gospel—that which combines meeting people's physical and spiritual needs.

Vancouver presents a daunting challenge for evangelism. "The world is moving to our city," says Dave Esau, associate pastor (until recently) of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, which houses a food bank that ministers to refugees. "Greater Vancouver's current population is 1.83 million and growing, and at least 28 percent of these people have a language other than English as their first language, comprising more than 20 language groups." Among Vancouver Mennonites, you might hear German, Japanese, Chinese (Cantonese) and Spanish spoken in addition to English.

Of the neighborhood of the Sherbrooke church itself, Esau says, "In 1968, when this church was started, 76 percent of members lived within two miles of the church. Now that's more like 35 percent. You used to be able to call this neighborhood 'Little Berlin,' and now it's more like 'Little Chinatown' or 'Little Punjab.'"

Vancouver's location, including a mild climate, has made it attractive to business investment and immigrants, many of whom are well-off, from Pacific Rim countries like Hong Kong and Taiwan (a newly coined term for the city is "Hongcouver"). More

"You used to be able to call this neighborhood **'Little Berlin,'** *and now it's more like* **'Little Chinatown'** *or* **'Little Punjab.'"**

Dave Esau

recently there has been an influx of immigrants from other parts of Asia, particularly India.

Language and culture are not the only challenges. So is economics. First United Spanish Mennonite Church is located at First United Mennonite Church, not far from the Sherbrooke Church. The people to whom the Spanish church ministers are a different "class" of immigrants than the majority of those from Asia. Many of these mostly Spanish-speaking people left their homes in Central America in fear for their lives and, unlike their Asian counterparts, usually bring no money and often have no family to take them in when they enter Canada.

Some of the City on a Hill projects minister to physical needs while others focus more on leadership training and discipleship. "Strong and committed Christians are the best tools to begin any kind of urban ministry," says Chiu, who initially worked on submitting the City on a Hill grant proposal.

But what all have in common, says Jorge Hoajaca, pastor at First United Spanish, is the vision statement adopted by the Mennonite churches: to bring healing and hope through Christ to the world. Hoajaca and the other members of the City on a Hill committee (Esau; Sherbrooke senior pastor Rudy Frose; Clare Neufeld of Cedar Hills Mennonite Church in Surrey; Anna Dyck of Surrey Mennonite Church, which meets at Cedar Hills, and City on a Hill project coordinator Jacobus Vroon of First United Spanish) recognize their challenge: to make that vision concrete in greater Vancouver.

Melanie A. Zuercher is news service editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church. She wrote the articles and took the photos that appear on pages 3-10.

Growth of nonreligion in B.C.

- British Columbians are less likely to have a religious affiliation* than other Canadians. 1991 Census data indicates that 30 percent of the residents of this province have no religious affiliation, a 28 percentage point increase relative to 1961.
- The number of Canadians professing no religious connection also grew during the last 30 years, but much less dramatically—rising from 0.5 to 12.5 percent.
- The increase in the number of nonreligious individuals in British Columbia seems to be associated with a relative decline in Protestant churches, which accounted for 79 percent of the population in 1961, but only 45 percent in 1991. The other religious groups maintained steady or slightly increasing population shares over the same period.

Three in 10 British Columbians do not have any religious affiliation.

*Census figures do not measure church membership or indicate the degree of affiliation with any religious body. They simply indicate the religious group to which individuals would belong if they were practicing members of their group.

Figures are taken from BC Stats, Census 91 Fast Facts, released June 1993 by the Labour and Social Statistics Section of the Province of British Columbia.

Mennonite churches in B.C.

Number of General Conference (Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia) churches in Vancouver and their membership:

Vancouver proper
- Vancouver Chinese Mennonite—173
- Grace Chinese Mennonite—48
- First United Mennonite—345
- Sherbrooke Mennonite—264
- First United Spanish Mennonite—32
- Point Grey Fellowship—57

Greater Vancouver area
- Cedar Hills Mennonite (Surrey)—51
- Surrey Mennonite (Japanese)—11
- Living Hope Christian Fellowship (Surrey/North Delta)—38
- Peace Mennonite (Richmond)—181
- Peace Chinese Mennonite (Richmond)—69

Abbotsford church reaches out to its neighbors.

Opportunity on the doorstep

Emmanuel Mennonite Church's opportunity for outreach ended up, literally, on the church doorstep.

The congregation formed in 1981 and moved to its current site in 1982. At that time, the building was surrounded by fields.

When senior pastor April Yamasaki began in 1993, however, most of the fields had been swallowed up by housing developments with a predominantly Indo-Canadian population.

As the housing developments and numbers of residents grew, many began using the church grounds. Kids played hockey in the parking lot, and older men gathered to visit on the steps and low walls around the church building.

"In June 1996, I told the church council my concern for relating to the community," April says. "Evangelism hadn't been an emphasis at Emmanuel. But it was getting to the point where we needed to look outward."

But there were special challenges. One was that, to some at Emmanuel, "to talk about evangelism was threatening," says April. "If it meant knocking on doors and passing out tracts—no way!" Another aspect to consider was the Sikh religion of many of the Indo-Canadian neighbors.

"So we decided to use a different approach," she says. "One [approach] was education—for ourselves. Another was simply being good neighbors."

To work on the educational part of its plan, the church invited two Indo-Canadians, former Sikhs who are now Christian, to share their testimonies. One of the men, Kewal Uppal, also led a Sunday school series on Punjabi/Sikh culture and religion.

It was one of the best-attended classes the church has ever had, says April. "We usually have 20 to 25 in adult Sunday school, but for this we had twice that, with some youth joining in, too. I think it showed that the congregation was ready for this."

Street hockey: This past April, the church began working on a "parking lot ministry" to the street hockey players. Eric Radke, a member of Emmanuel's mission committee, set aside every Saturday afternoon to play with the kids, most of them grade seven or younger. He did this through early summer.

The church also planned an activity they hoped would get more of the community involved. Although most of the fields that used to surround the church building are gone, there is still a large, grassy area to the west, on land the church owns. In August, the church printed and members distributed flyers in the neighborhood, inviting everyone to a picnic to be held under a tent erected on the grass. Most of the flyer was in English, but the word "welcome" was printed in Punjabi and Hindi.

"Indo-Canadians love festivals," says April. "But we found out we had scheduled the picnic on the same day as the annual Indo-Canadian games."

The church wants to try the picnic again, using what they've learned from their first experience. The church is also thinking about someday building a permanent structure—a covered seating area—in the green space, developing it into a neighborhood park.

Many of these ideas are not likely to develop for some time, however. "It's like a golf game, and we're only on the first or second hole," April says.

City on a Hill money has gone to pay honoraria for special speakers and buy some hockey equipment for the parking lot ministry. But more than that, says April, "to be part of City on a Hill helps us see that this is part of a larger vision."

She notes Paul's inclusive vision in Acts 10 and says, "Our church's purpose statement talks about making disciples. But even before that, we have to build relationships." *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Being good neighbors: *April Yamasaki points out land her church wants to use for outreach.*

Little church with big dreams

A retired missionary plants a Japanese-speaking congregation in Vancouver.

Anna Dyck figured she'd retire from mission work in 1992—she would, after all, be 70. But God and some Japanese Mennonites had other plans.

Anna first went to Japan in 1953 with the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church, to work as a nurse. She began doing evangelism among the medical staff with whom she worked and ended up as a career missionary in evangelism and church planting in Japan.

In 1988, Anna came home to Canada for her last furlough before her final four-year COM term. She went to visit some friends, Mr. and Mrs. Tada, former members of the first COM congregation in Japan (the Oyodo church in Miyazaki city), now living in Surrey, B.C., in the greater Vancouver area.

"They told me they wanted to start a Mennonite church like they'd known back in Japan, there in Surrey," Anna says. "They said, 'We'll wait until you come back [for good].'"

Four years later, Anna returned to Canada with the affirmation of the Japan Mennonite Conference as a church planter. She bought a house two doors from the Tadas, and Surrey Mennonite Church began meeting there in January 1992. At Easter that year, the church celebrated its first baptism, of a couple named Mr. and Mrs. Takeda.

The church grew to its current size of 11 baptized members, with an attendance of 15 to 20. This meant that Anna's home was no longer large enough to house the group comfortably. In addition, municipal bylaws prohibit a church meeting in a home. City officials told church members that as long as there was no complaint from neighbors, they were all right. But Anna didn't like the strain of wondering when a complaint might come.

CEDAR HILLS MENNONITE CHURCH
PASTOR CLARE NEUFELD
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PASTOR ANNA DYCK
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Holy atmosphere: *Anna Dyck and Clare Neufeld*

The church's location in a home also hindered its potential for outreach. There are about 450 Japanese families in the area, says Anna, and Surrey Mennonite church is the only Japanese-speaking church around.

Space-sharing: In January 1996, Surrey Mennonite leaders decided to approach Cedar Hills Mennonite Church, also in Surrey, about space-sharing. Clare Neufeld, Cedar Hills pastor, was immediately enthusiastic about the idea.

"Our building was underused," Clare says. "We had three Sunday school rooms in the basement that could be used for adult and children's Sunday school and expanded for worship space."

Surrey Mennonite began meeting in the Cedar Hills basement late in 1996. Both groups hold Sunday school and worship at the same time on Sunday mornings.

"We can each hear each other some, but that's OK," says Clare. "It makes a holy atmosphere."

When Surrey and Cedar Hills applied for City on a Hill funding, they envisioned using the money to do some renovation in the basement to enhance its usefulness to the Japanese group. Now that idea has changed.

Anna recently had major surgery and, she says, "I tire more easily. I'm really ready to retire and go home to Saskatchewan." She is responsible for leading the Sunday morning services and Wednesday evening Bible studies, held in homes.

The plan for the City on a Hill funds now is to help pay a Japanese worker to come to Surrey and lead the church. A young man, Mr. Yoshiyuki, is attending Tokyo Bible Institute with the plan of moving with his family to Vancouver eventually.

One Sunday a month a lay person leads the Sunday service. Anna pays special attention to the role of women.

"Every station I worked at in Japan, I got the women involved," she says. "I thought that was important, because Japan is a man's country. Here the women take their turn leading the Sunday service, often giving their testimony. I admire their courage, knowing where they come from."

Might Surrey and Cedar Hills one day become one multiethnic, outreach-focused, Anabaptist congregation? Only God knows that, say both Clare and Anna. But it's something to dream about. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

"Here the women take their turn leading the Sunday service, often giving their testimony. I admire their courage, knowing where they come from." **Anna Dyck**

Youth Evangelism Service B.C. trains young disciples for holistic ministry.

The future is now

David Chiu disagrees with the oft-heard statement that "youth are the church of the future."

Youth, says David, director of evangelism and church development for the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia (CMinBC), are the church now. Yet the church is losing them. "Youth say that the culture of the church is no longer relevant."

He has long dreamed of a program that will "generate enthusiasm [among youth in B.C.] for mission but, more importantly, develop character through discipleship training."

After years of looking at other models, David decided that Youth Evangelism Service, or YES, came closest to what he and the conference had in mind. YES is run by Eastern Mennonite Missions of Salunga, Pa.

CMinBC is now halfway through a two-year pilot project. In September, three teams of young people (10 in all, plus three team leaders) finished three months of discipleship training and left for eight-month terms in Spain, Brazil and Mexico.

The support of the City on a Hill grant helps pay some of the training expenses. YES B.C. co-directors Sandy Waltner from Freeman, S.D., and Tim Martin of Lancaster, Pa., continue to work on developing the program and recruiting a new group of young people.

Communal living: The intensive training period distinguishes YES B.C. from many similar youth mission programs. It consists of communal living, spiritual formation, study of Anabaptist history, tradition and theology and "applied evangelism," says David. For the latter, the trainees were involved twice a week in hands-on ministry such as serving in soup kitchens and working with Hispanic youth.

"This is something that combines service with evangelism," he says. "They're linked. Outreach needs to be holistic. And we need to help our youth [in B.C.] see a needy world—B.C. is affluent; most Mennonite families are well-off.

"Young people are leaders now, not only in the future, and they'll be a different kind of leader if they've gone through YES. They'll be more sensitive to the world, more able to cope with change. It's the fear of change that is a major reason churches can't reach out."

David says that young people who have participated in YES B.C. are more committed to the church; about 40 percent of "alumni" are still in some kind of ministry.

He dreams that one thing YES B.C. might do in Vancouver is "prepare people to be leaders of churches started with the poor."

David doesn't know if he'll ever see this dream come true. He will complete his last term of service with CMinBC in February and isn't sure what the future holds for him.

But he hopes that YES B.C., boosted by City on a Hill, will plant seeds that can sprout into effective outreach in greater Vancouver in the years ahead. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

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"It's the fear of change that is a major reason churches can't reach out."

David Chiu

A new wave of refugees

Strangers become friends at Sherbrooke's food bank.

Many members of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, can still remember what it was like to be refugees.

Sherbrooke, which holds two Sunday worship services, one in German and one in English, is largely made up of German-speaking Mennonites who immigrated to Canada from Russia, some by way of South America, within the last 50 years. And now the church has opened its facilities to a new wave of refugees.

In 1996, the government of British Columbia passed some tough new immigration laws. One of them barred anyone who had been in the province less than three months from receiving social assistance. "We've always had this social safety net in Canada that would pay for food, transportation, housing and employment aid for those who lacked it," says Dave Esau, Sherbrooke's associate pastor until recently. "That net could catch small fish for a long time, but lately the holes have been getting bigger and bigger."

The group hardest hit by the new laws were "refugee claimants," people without legal refugee status whose claims were in process. Most of these came from Latin America with no money and no family already in British Columbia to support them.

"They were now sleeping in cemeteries and under bridges," says Dave. "They began begging at the MCC [Mennonite Central Committee] office in Vancouver, which was quickly overwhelmed. So MCC came to the Vancouver area pastors for help."

Out of this need came the Refugee Claimants' Food Bank, which has received some funding from City on a Hill.

Sherbrooke agreed to house the food bank. It had the space; it worked closely with nearby First United Spanish Mennonite Church, and some of its members, having lived in South America earlier in their lives, spoke Spanish. One of these is lead pastor Rudy Frose, who went to Paraguay from Russia before coming to Canada.

A different vision: From the beginning, people at Sherbrooke had a different vision for the food bank. "We didn't want it to be just a handout," says Rudy. "We thought about how we could make this evangelistic. We didn't want to 'buy' people, just sit and talk with them. So we decided to have coffee available."

"A girl in our congregation worked at Robin's Donuts," says Dave, "and one day she came to us and said there were always day-old donuts they couldn't sell, and they'd only be thrown away. Did we want them?"

The food bank started out serving 10 families at a time and has now expanded to 15. Families are referred to the food bank by the MCC B.C. refugee office. They receive a punch-card good for eight visits (two months): Once a week, they pick up a bag containing about $20 worth of mostly nonperishable food. And when they arrive at the food bank on Thursday, its open morning, there are several people there to greet them and invite them to come in and sit at the table and enjoy coffee and donuts.

Looking outside: *Two of the volunteers at Sherbrooke's food bank*

"Some of them don't want to stay," says Dave. "Many of them have undergone horrendous experiences. They live under a constant cloud of fear and can share stories about war, torture and rape. But many of them do stay and talk."

Early on, Rudy asked Jorge Hoajaca, pastor at First United Spanish, and his assistant, Jacobus Vroon, to be involved in the food bank's "Thursday morning ministry." And by now the food bank, which celebrated its first anniversary Oct. 25, has seen some of its clients come full circle: Because of the food bank they began attending First United Spanish, and now, though no longer eligible for the food, they come back on Thursdays to visit with new clients and even share their testimonies (see page 9).

Other contacts have led to more resources for sharing. As word about the ministry has spread, other restaurants and some food stores have offered perishable items, such as day-old bread, to the food bank, to the extent that one of the needs for which the church hopes to use City on a Hill money is for more freezers to store the food from week to week.

"One time we had someone call us and say there had been a special promotion in their store and they had 100 pots and pans that people had turned in, most in good condition, just not 'matched sets,' and did we want

"Fewer than half our members live in the neighborhood anymore .... The only way we can survive and grow is to get involved in cross-cultural ministry."

Dave Esau

them," says Dave. "Just the week before, we'd been talking about the fact that we give people food, but they have nothing to cook it in."

"There was a Guatemalan family [food bank clients] who had one room with a mattress on the floor and one pot to cook with," says Rudy. "We showed them the boxes [of pots and pans] and said, 'You pick out whatever you want.' Their eyes opened wide—they couldn't believe it."

Still, both Rudy and Dave emphasize that the church's goals go beyond meeting physical needs.

Cross-cultural ministry: "We see the food bank as a tremendous mission opportunity," says Dave. "Fewer than half our members live in the neighborhood anymore, and our membership is dwindling. The only way we can survive and grow is to get involved in cross-cultural ministry.

"When are people most open to the gospel? When they're in transition," says Dave. "Refugees are in the biggest transition of their lives."

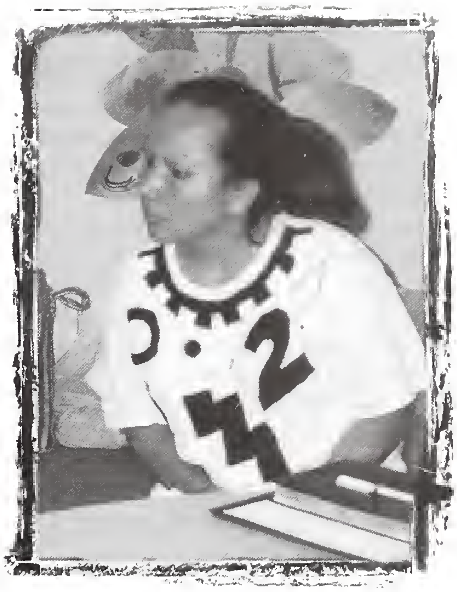
The Sherbrooke Church itself is in a time of transition. "Our people have seen their neighborhood change so much [in the past 15 to 20 years]," says Rudy. "It's scary."

The food bank ministry has provided a way of "looking outside." "We're getting exposed to mission at home," says Rudy. "We're so minded to look at it as being overseas. It helps break down stereotypes—because 'those people' are no longer strangers."

Both pastors know there are plenty of challenges ahead, especially with Dave leaving to become pastor at a Mennonite Brethren church closer to where he lives.

"City on the Hill has given us a shot in the arm," says Rudy. "We hope it will help us get the vision and become even more open to looking for opportunities in and reaching out to the community." *Melanie A. Zuercher*

'A righteous woman'



When Arabella Argueta came to Canada, she wasn't completely alone—but she was close.

With her husband left behind in Guatemala, Arabella and her young daughter, Odeth, arrived in Vancouver in November 1996, at a time when the government was providing almost nothing for "refugee claimants" like her. In January, Arabella, Odeth and her sister found their way to the Mennonite Central Committee B.C. refugee office, which directed them to the food bank at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church.

"People come to the food bank and sit around circular tables," says Jacobus Vroon, assistant to pastor Jorge Hoajaca at nearby First United Spanish Mennonite Church. "They ask a lot of questions, like, 'What are Mennonites? Are they Christian?'"

Jorge, Ericka, his wife, and Jacobus all spent time with Arabella. "I started going to [First United Spanish] the second week of January," she says. "I accepted Jesus on Feb. 2 and I was baptized in March. And then I started coming back to help at the food bank."

"Help" to Arabella means "talk about Jesus" to people she meets there. "I like to come here, because it's a good experience for us to talk about Jesus," she says. "Every time I meet people—at the mall, on the train—I invite them to come to our church and I tell them about Jesus."

Odeth is almost as enthusiastic, Arabella says. "Every day she says, 'Mommy, today are we going to church?' She'd like to go every day."

"It's been wonderful to watch," says Jacobus. "It's like God saying to us, 'You're on the right track, you're doing the right thing.' She's been a constant source of joy and assurance that God is blessing us. And as we ministered to Arabella, she ministered to her sister, and she grew in faith. She comes to the food bank now as an evangelist.

"It's been wonderful to see the growth. As pastors, all we're meant to do is plant the seed, and we're not usually allowed to see the growth. This time God blessed us by allowing us to see the flowering and bearing fruit. Arabella is a light in our church, a role model for other single mothers.

"My hope is that one day she'll become a leader in the church. If God ever placed a righteous woman on this earth, it was Arabella."*Melanie A. Zuercher*

Pastors look for ways to boost refugees' self-esteem.

Recovering hope

Jorge Hoajaca, pastor of First United Spanish Mennonite Church, Vancouver, knows where his congregation is coming from.

The majority of the small congregation are refugees. Jorge, Ericka, his wife, and their infant child left their native Guatemala in 1986 after Jorge, a university student at the time, began receiving death threats. When they ended up in Medicine Hat, Alta., Jorge and Ericka initially had trouble finding jobs.

The Hoajacas came to First United Spanish in July 1996. Now some of Jorge's dreams for better serving his congregation are getting a boost from City on a Hill.

An estimated 40,000 Hispanics live in the greater Vancouver and Lower Mainland area, almost all of them designated as some kind of refugee.

"We're ministering in a context of insecurity, poverty and unemployment," says Jacobus Vroon, pastoral assistant at First United Spanish. "It takes one to two years to become an 'accepted refugee' in Canada, and it can become a time of soul destruction. Their sense of self completely and methodically goes down each time they try to help themselves and fail."

"In our church, we have 70 to 75 percent unemployment," Jorge says. "That's a reflection of the larger Hispanic population [in Vancouver]. When they lose self-esteem, they also lose hope. It gets harder to encourage people to go out and look for work because they're asking themselves, 'Am I worth it? Can I do it?'"

Dysfunctional church: "It's affecting our ministry," he adds. "It's hard to equip and train leaders [under these circumstances]. We have dysfunctional families because of their context, and that leads to a dysfunctional church. So we've been asking ourselves, how can we bring hope? How can we build some self-esteem?"

They hope to do that with an employment skills training center, for which the board of nearby Sherbrooke Mennonite Church has approved space in its building. Several tables have been donated—along with three used computers reconditioned or rebuilt by Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia conference minister Chris Arney and his son.

First United Church, where First United Spanish meets, already runs an English as a second language program, so the new center will focus on what Jorge calls "basic life skills" such as how to access government services and medical services and how to manage money. They also plan to offer basic computer training (typing, word processing, data entry).

Jacobus, who will have main responsibility for coordinating the center's work, says they plan to get volunteers from the Vancouver Mennonite community to teach classes. "There's a large aging population out there with all kinds of skills. The key is networking, finding the knowledge that can be channeled."

Jorge and Jacobus also see this as a way to improve interracial relationships and break down barriers between professional, Anglo, generally well-off Vancouver Mennonites and their Hispanic brothers and sisters. It's all part of "bringing the gospel in a holistic way," says Jorge.

And that's what is at the heart of this ministry. "Go back and look at Jesus," he says. "What effect would Jesus' message have had if he hadn't fed the hungry, healed the sick, freed the oppressed? We're facing the same situation. We'd have an empty message if the gospel came without service.

"I like the [Mennonite church's] 'Vision: Healing and Hope' motto," says Jorge. "But it must be more than a motto. We have to make God's healing and hope flowing through us to the world a reality." *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Training center: *Jorge Hoajaca with donated computers*

Letters

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SEEKING JUST SOLUTIONS

Thank you for the excellent issue (Sept. 23) featuring stories about the struggle and reality of the Rio Grande Valley. This, the world's longest border between a so-called First-World country (United States) and a so-called Third-World country (Mexico), certainly is a huge challenge to those of us seeking just solutions to corporate greed, enonomic injustice, oppressive power, brutal government and human behaviors, and insensitive judgments. As Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) workers attempt to respond from their own good fortune with faith-based responses of service and support, seldom is the story effectively told. Your articles are a good step in that direction.

My wife, Jane, and I have recently returned from an MVS meeting in Brownsville, Texas, where we were again reminded of the beauty and tragedy of these borders. We lived, worked and learned as MVSers in San Antonio, Texas, from 1989 to 1994 with people who came to "el Norte" seeking a "better life for their children." This struggle is hard, full of danger for them and equally hard to grasp for those of us who have never lived in such an uncertain, dangerous reality.

My thanks to *The Mennonite*, author Christy Risser and those MVSers who are gaining better appreciation for this huge challenge to those of us having the good fortune to live in security and stability. This dichotomy seems to represent our opportunity to respond effectively as we share our good fortune and faith-based lives. As we continually struggle to cross cultural barriers, stories of the crossing of the Rio Grande need to be told with clarity and truth. Thanks for this sound step in that direction. *Wes Hare, MVS/ Christian Peacemaker Teams, Richmond, Va.*

MISUNDERSTANDING

I would like to correct a misunderstanding that may be drawn from the item about the Rainbow Mennonite Church ("Rainbow Church Faces Conference Discipline," Aug. 26 issue, page 14). I do not know at this point what options the ballot, which the South Central Mennonite Conference will be mailing to member churches in October, will contain. I based my expectation on what has been happening in other conferences within the Mennonite Church.

I also want to thank you for carrying the excerpts from moderator Howard Keim's address at the meeting of the South Central Mennonite Conference last July (page 14). People on both sides of the issue expressed appreciation for his remarks. *Frank G. Ward, pastor, Rainbow Mennonite Church*

THE DEVIL'S HAND

Where has the separation of church and state gotten us? It has brought us before the graven image that the Lord told us not to worship or create.

Every time I see the words "In God We Trust" on our currency, I shake my head. If money were used for attaining equality, peace, comfort and world unity through the method the Lord has prescribed, I could understand those words being on our currency. But the exact opposite is happening. Money is used as the devil's hand in funding arms dealers, wars, exploitation, excessive consumerism, physical abuses to men, women and children, and the destruction of our planet—all at an accelerated pace.

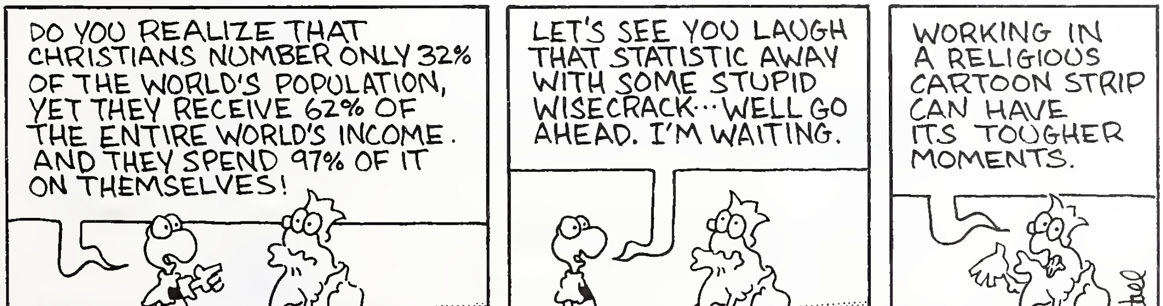
We need to question the morality and wisdom of this separation of church and state, this tragic abyss. We need to define the line of this separation. Where people's lives are damaged by the state's decisions, it is obvious that the line needs to be moved, and people's welfare comes under church laws, God's laws. Too many powers have been given to the state through this separation, as is evident from the new immigration laws. Godliness and morality are church powers, not the state's. The state should have to answer to the church for every human rights abuse they cause through their valueless decisions. This is what the people need to change, since it is the people who are in control and are affected by the decisions of a separated state, almost always adversely, due to the nefarious greed that runs most states' agenda. All the churches of the world need to unite and become one strong voice, a voice the states cannot ignore.

A church without any political redress is a helpless church. *Orville A. Lippens, Lompoc, Calif., and Chicago*

WAKE-UP CALL

The expulsion of Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, from the Mennonite Church by vote of the Franconia Conference (Oct. 28 issue, page 13) should be a wake-up call for all sane Mennonites. How dare a group of fellow Christians tell me and my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters whether or not we are acceptable to God. Are heterosexual people so perfect that they are in a position to offer judgment? I have had my fill of church people who claim to "love in the name of Christ" and "practice nonviolence." Even those of us who are minorities deserve conference and congregational protection. It is time to stop this ridiculous practice of getting rid of people we don't understand. There should be room for all in the kingdom of God. I pray for all of us in these dark times. *Gary R. Barber, San Francisco*

Pontius' Puddle


DO YOU REALIZE THAT CHRISTIANS NUMBER ONLY 32% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, YET THEY RECEIVE 62% OF THE ENTIRE WORLD'S INCOME. AND THEY SPEND 97% OF IT ON THEMSELVES!
LET'S SEE YOU LAUGH THAT STATISTIC AWAY WITH SOME STUPID WISECRACK··· WELL GO AHEAD. I'M WAITING.
WORKING IN A RELIGIOUS CARTOON STRIP CAN HAVE ITS TOUGHER MOMENTS.

Learning to pray

Start a prayer choir

Praying together can strengthen our spirits and encourage our faith.

Marlene Kropf

Marlene Kropf is assistant professor in spiritual formation and worship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

The phone rings. When I answer, the caller asks, "How can we strengthen group prayer in our congregation?" It's the same question I've received from several callers in recent weeks. No doubt the flurry of calls is coming partly in response to the first priority of Vision: Healing and Hope, which is to enrich our prayer.

With increased interest in spirituality has come a renewed emphasis on prayer and personal spiritual disciplines. In our secular age, such an emphasis is indeed welcome. It also seems appropriate, however, for Mennonites to care for the communal dimensions of spirituality. While a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ is essential, we also believe that growing toward mature faith requires participation in a Christian community.

My friend and colleague June Alliman Yoder, who teaches preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., has responded to this concern by establishing a "prayer choir" in her congregation, College Mennonite Church, in Goshen, Ind. Her story, in her own words, may inspire other congregations:

A number of years ago I was looking for a prayer group and couldn't find one. I have since discovered that there are many small private prayer pockets in our congregation, but those were not open to me for various reasons. However, I noticed that we had five music choirs and two bell choirs—so it came to me that it must be the word "choir" that works. So I started a prayer choir. We meet for prayer at the same time the music choirs meet to rehearse.

Triune God: Prayer choir meets in a dimly lighted room (so we are not overly distracted by our physical surroundings) in a circle of chairs around a small table on which are set three small, lighted oil lamps. The lamps remind us of the presence of the triune God in our midst. We also keep a box of tissues handy because often someone is moved to tears when we pray.

> ***While a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ is essential, we also believe that growing toward mature faith requires participation in a Christian community.***

At 6:30 p.m. our leader calls us to be quiet, and we spend the first 10 minutes in silence. It is a time to center our spirits, gather our scattered thoughts, and place ourselves more consciously in the presence of the living God. The leader then closes the time of silence with a short prayer.

Then we gather the prayer needs that are on people's hearts. Everyone is encouraged to speak their requests, but each is invited to participate as seems comfortable. It is important to note that this is not a sharing time. We name the needs and the items for praise and thanksgiving, but we don't discuss details. Only the details that are important to prayer are shared, and we are amazed at how few those are. Many prayer groups have dissolved because they have become sharing groups with only five minutes to spare for prayer. So we gather what we need to pray about, then spend about 40 minutes in prayer.

The actual prayer time often reminds me of a living room conversation. A topic comes up, and a number of people pray regarding the topic. One person prays in sentences or a short paragraph, then another prays. Sometimes one person will speak many times, most will pray more than once, and sometimes an individual will not pray aloud all evening.

Shortly before 7:30, the leader offers a concluding prayer on behalf of all the prayers spoken and unspoken, and the "amen" is pronounced. The whole choir stands, joins hands, and as one body says the Lord's Prayer together.

It seems so simple, but I am amazed at how this practice of prayer over the years has built up the body of Christ—how our spirits are strengthened, our faith encouraged, the circle of fellowship deepened. The practice is a simple one—simple and life-changing.

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Focus

Studying the Bible: Inexhaustible riches

That I am able to study the Bible as a vocation I owe principally to two things, or rather to two groups of people—parents and teachers. My mother nightly read me chapters from Catherine Vos's *The Child's Story Bible*, before I could read them for myself. I don't know how many times we read through that book, but the stories never left me. Those from the Old Testament were the most captivating, of course.

My father was the pastor of a small church in Oklahoma, and Bible study (he pronounced it more like "steady") occupied much of his time. With expository sermons to preach on Sunday mornings, a biblical meditation Sunday evening, and a Bible study to lead every Wednesday night, he had time for little else. He loved the Bible and found its riches inexhaustible. As I recall, his series of Sunday sermons from 1 Corinthians occupied most of my grade-school years, and I still associate Wednesday nights with 1 Peter.

Occasionally, when my father came upon an especially difficult passage, he would refer to what he had learned from reading among "the Bible scholars." These remote and mysterious figures were my first superheroes.

From my parents I acquired an abiding love of and respect for the Bible. From a series of university and seminary professors I learned to study it rigorously and with critical discipline. Graduate school provided me the kind of technical skills that are required of someone who wants to study the Bible professionally—and to teach. Technical skills applied critically to any subject can render it, after awhile, lifeless and uninteresting. And analyzing the Bible in its minute details could become, I suppose, like surgery that disregards the living patient. This seems impossible to me.

J. Tyler Klassen

Although, owing to a series of instructive misadventures, I attended a secular university, my first Greek teacher there read with us from the New Testament every Friday. In a book he gave me later, he inscribed his favorite line, from the poet Keats: "a thing of beauty is a joy forever."

My parents and teachers helped me to see, unforgettably, the Bible's beauty.

Its beauty derives, of course, from the Bible's unfailing witness to God who is beauty's source and pinnacle (Ps 27:4), and who meets us unfailingly in scripture. Perhaps the most valuable lesson I have learned in my years of studying the Bible is this: that it rewards all kinds of seriously devoted study—or that God does. My father was right: its riches are inexhaustible. They are also essential, because the church and the spirit of every Christian depend for nurture on the Bible's riches. These are more readily discovered in some places than in others, more evident in some times than in others, and often as disturbing as they are comforting. Moreover, God has not left it to Bible scholars alone to discover the Bible's riches—a fact for which we are all grateful! Even so, I can imagine no vocation more fulfilling.

Ben C. Ollenburger, professor of biblical theology, AMBS

Inside

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A place where people meet God

How computers enhance Bible study

Panorama: Preview of Summer 1998 courses

AMBS seeks to understand, delight in, and witness to the Scriptures as normative for faith and life in conversation with the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage, the larger Christian church, and the world.

Excerpt, AMBS mission statement

Writing a Bible commentary:

Taking a journey to Thessalonica

In 1986 I went on a pilgrimage to modern Thessaloniki. My personal two-day tour of this city where Paul planted a church was part of my first sabbatical in the eastern Mediterranean (mainly Israel/Palestine) in 1985-86.

Seven years later I spent all of my second sabbatical year commuting between ancient Thessalonica and twentieth century North America. Most of my "commute" occurred in my office with my books and computer.

In writing a commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians I tried to listen carefully to the conversations between Paul and the young church in first century Thessalonica. In order to make Paul's pastoral interventions more intelligible to the readers of the Believers Church Bible Commentary (BCBC) I also needed to tune in to the issues and concerns of Mennonites and others in the Believers Church family.

Every time I worked with a particular passage, I felt like a pastor preparing to preach. My "sermons" were long, occasionally perhaps too technical, and generally not specific enough to local congregational concerns. My congregation was the church, more specifically the believers church. Yet the components of a sermon are to be found in every section of any BCBC commentary. Each section has a preview which opens with an attention grabber. Next an outline lets the listener (the reader) know how many points the sermon will have. Then come the explanations of the text (Explanatory Notes), and some canonical reflections (Text in Biblical Context). Finally the preacher seeks to build bridges between the world of the text and the worlds of the people in the congregations (Text in the Life of the Church). Each of these steps needs to take place whenever the preacher prepares for proclamation of the gospel!

Often preachers choose to avoid this kind of commute. Either they stay in the biblical world so long that they lose their audience, or they domesticate the text for the sake of contemporary relevance. Both serious listening to the text and Spirit-led application of the text for the life of the church are needed. The BCBC commentaries are dedicated to the task of facilitating this journey from God's word to life.

- Jacob W. Elias
Professor of New Testament

Willard M. Swartley, AMBS dean and professor of New Testament, team-teaches the course, Biblical Spirituality with Marcus G. Smucker, associate professor of pastoral theology. Here Willard prepares to lead the students in the class in reading several prayers that were prayed in the synagogues of Jesus' time. The 23 students in the class gain a biblical foundation for their understanding of spirituality and for the spiritual disciplines they are encouraged to practice.
Photo by Mary E. Klassen

AMBS faculty involved in commentary series

The Believers Church Bible Commentaries are published by Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa. Willard Swartley, AMBS dean and professor of New Testament, is the New Testament editor for the volumes. Another AMBS professor, Millard Lind, AMBS professor emeritus of Old Testament and Hebrew, has written a commentary on Ezekiel.

The experience of encountering God while working on biblical texts was important to Mary Schertz as a student at AMBS. Now she tries to help students have similar experiences as she teaches New Testament Greek.
Photo by Mary E. Klassen

A place where people meet God

When I signed up for Hebrew that spring many years ago, I expected to learn Hebrew. I didn't expect to meet God face to face. But that is in fact what happened.

My love affair with the biblical texts all began on a sweaty, late May afternoon in the Conference Room at AMBS. The room was stuffy even with the windows wide open and Millard Lind's beloved and much imitated lecture voice was encountering serious competition from the mower just outside on the north lawn.

The text was Exodus 20:5-6, and Millard was explaining what we were reading in our halting, stumbling Hebrew. As we were reading, both the mower and Millard's voice faded into the background. I was left alone in the desert miles away and eons ago with the discovery that while the "sins of the fathers" were passed on to the next three or four generations, a truth that I could fathom, God's love was passed on to the thousands and thousands of generations—a truth I could not fathom but which somehow I "got," perhaps for the first time. Understanding that the effects of iniquity are limited by God's limitless love was for me, that late spring day, a profound encounter with the holy.

In our Bible exposition courses at AMBS, we have worked especially hard to maintain rigor and still be practical in our study of biblical texts. Computer technology has made biblical study enormously easier and faster. We have developed an exciting method that focuses on reading the text itself, rather than the conventional emphases of the historical critical method. But for all our passion and hard work, the wonder of biblical exposition at AMBS is not a matter of either technique or method. The wonder is that our classes are lively, engaging places where the word is truly heard, debated and taken to heart. The wonder is that the study circle is a holy place, a place where people meet God.

- Mary H. Schertz
Associate professor of New Testament

How computers enhance Bible study

The latest technology and our oldest book may seem like strange bedfellows, but at AMBS we are developing ways to use computers to enhance our understanding of Scripture.

First, computers can significantly enhance your ability to read biblical texts. For example, in the program we use, Bible Windows, the meaning of a Greek or Hebrew word is only a mouse click away. In fact, you can display a version of the text which not only has an English translation but also the underlying Greek or Hebrew word. The reaction of past seminarians to this facility is often, "Wow, I went to seminary twenty years too soon!"

Second, it is a snap to copy biblical texts from a computer Bible program to your word processor. In fact, you can type a Bible reference, push a key or two and the text appears in your document. Then you can begin to analyze the text. For example, it is very illuminating to divide a text up into its clauses. This arrangement allows you to 'see' the text in ways which are just not possible when looking at it with its words printed from column to column. In fact, you may find this tool of study so useful and insightful as to become addictive!

We have found the computers helpful in other ways as well, but these two are perhaps the most significant for our students and for you. Welcome to Bible study in the 21st century.

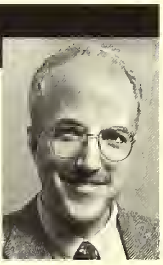
- Perry B. Yoder
Professor of Old Testament

Palmer Becker, pastor of Calvary Mennonite Church, Aurora, Ore., was Theological Center Guest at AMBS, October 6-11. In chapel services, lectures, and the weekly forum, Palmer shared from his experiences in ministry, particularly his work with small groups in congregations.

He emphasizes two aspects of church life, Palmer says: celebration and cell. In worship services the congregation meets and celebrates God; in small groups (cells), the congregation receives nurture and pastoral care.

The Theological Center Guest week is also a time for students to gain insights and resources from people already in ministry. Here Todd Martin, AMBS student from Orrville, Ohio, talks with Palmer about his books, Called to Equip *and* Called to Care.
Photo by Mary E. Klassen

President's Window



In recent months, two people in the Mennonite church have sought me out to voice a concern about the role of the Bible in public worship. Both were raised in the Mennonite church, participated in other denominations as adults, and came back to the Mennonite church in mid-life. Both reported seeing a worrisome trend in several denominations, including our own. Increasingly, ministers use the scriptures simply as a launching pad for whatever they want to talk about in a sermon. Instead of helping congregations grapple seriously with the issues in a given biblical text, preachers are likely to take one theme from a passage and use that to develop their own trajectory of ideas and opinions. The result is that we know more about what the preacher thinks than what the Bible says.

AMBS is a *biblical* seminary, which means the Scriptures are at the heart of our how we understand ministry. On this campus you find people analyzing Hebrew and Greek verbs, memorizing whole passages, experimenting with biblical storytelling, praying the Psalms, and otherwise immersing themselves in the ancient books of Jewish and Christian faith. Ministry students do more than learn about *hermeneutics* (determining what a text means). They also hone skills of *homelitics* (preaching), learning fruitful ways to draw from scripture for teaching in the congregation. In all of this, students and professors expect to hear the word of God.

North American society is less biblically literate than it was a generation or two ago, and that shift has affected the Mennonite church. Fred Craddock, a theologian with particular interest in preaching, compares biblical preaching to putting money in the bank. Week after week, he says, preachers tell and retell the great biblical narratives. They build up a reservoir of biblical understanding and images in the congregation that become a spiritual "bank account" members can draw upon for sustenance and discernment. May God raise up a generation of preachers and teachers who help the Mennonite church replenish our store of biblical knowledge!

- J. Nelson Kraybill

AMBS has entered the final "Over the Top" phase of the Partners for Ministry comprehensive campaign.

The steering committee, in their September meeting, made new pledges to support the seminary. They also challenged all students, faculty, staff and alumni to contribute—even a small gift—in order to push the total from $11 million to the goal of $11.9 million by December 31.

OVER THE TOP

The "Over the Top" effort undergirds the partnership between the church and AMBS in preparing people for church leadership in the next century.

AMBS Panorama

Summer School preview

During June and August 1998, AMBS will offer:

- Foundations of Hebrew Exposition: Prophets, *Perry Yoder*
- Expository Preaching *David Greiser*
- Clergy Ethics *Joseph Kotva, Jr.*
- Religious and Psychological Assessment *Ruth Lesher*
- Anabaptist History and Theology *Arnold Snyder, KarlKoop*
- Pastoral Psychology *Daniel Schipani*
- Aging and Pastoral Care *David Brunner*
- Contemporary Spirituality *Marcus Smucker*
- Conflict, Communication and Conciliation *John Paul Lederach*
- Creation and Spiritual Renewal *Perry Yoder*

Mission and Evangelism Institute preview

During July and early August, AMBS will offer:

- Community Holistic Development *Boyd Johnson*
- Contemporary Theologies of Mission *Wilbert Shenk*
- Local Congregations as Mission *Charles van Engen*
- Turning Around the Church *Art McPhee*

Hymn Festival to honor Mary K. Oyer

A hymn festival at AMBS, April 24-25, 1998, will celebrate the many contributions Mary K. Oyer has made to Mennonite music and worship in her 50 years of teaching in Mennonite schools. Many who simply love to sing will gather to enjoy two days of singing and exploring hymns in *Hymnal, A Worship Book.* Some of the featured musicians will be Deb Brubacher, Marilyn Houser Hamm, Hiram Hershey, Shirley Sprunger King, Bradley Lehman, Ken Nafziger, and Doyle Preheim.

For information, contact Janeen Bertsche Johnson at AMBS, 219 296-6216 or jbjohnson@ambs.edu.

Recent releases from IMS

The Institute of Mennonite Studies has recently released several new books, including writings by Marlin E. Miller and writings by Ross T. Bender. IMS also has released a volume of papers read at the Menno Simons 500 International Symposium in the Netherlands in 1996.

For more information, contact the IMS office at AMBS: 219 296-6239 or rliechty@ambs.edu.

Advent resources on the web

AMBS Bible faculty have again written commentaries on the lectionary readings for advent. These can be found on the AMBS web page: http://www.ambs.edu.

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

Editor and designer: Mary E. Klassen

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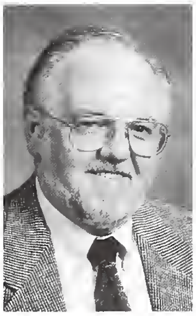
COE names publisher, executive secretary

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The Commission on Education and the General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church announce the appointment of Dennis M. Good as executive secretary of COE and publisher for Faith & Life Press (FLP), effective Nov. 1.


Dennis Good

Good is currently director of operations for FLP, a position he assumed in July 1996. He will not be replaced. Instead, the job description of FLP financial assistant Bruce Claassen will be adjusted, and another full-time person will be hired in the area of finances, to take up many of the director of operations responsibilities.

As COE executive secretary, Good will administer the commission's programs, develop plans, policies and budget and arrange for and supervise COE staff. As FLP publisher, he will also work with budget and personnel.

"The appointment of Dennis Good

Inside the news

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Spirit of peace

Fidele Lumeya

Bukavu, Congo (MCC/AIMM/MBMS)—As mist rose off Lake Kivu at 7 a.m. on Aug. 24, Pastor Philemon Begela baptized Jean de Dieu into the Mennonite Church of the Great Lakes.

The Mennonite church in Bukavu, eastern Congo (formerly Zaire), was planted in 1996 by Congolese lay missionaries as an outreach of the Congolese Mennonite churches, and attracted members from all ethnic groups and tribes, a rarity in this region torn by ethnic tension.

The Begelas, a Congolese missionary couple, were slated to come from Kinshasa, the country's capital, to Bukavu to assume the pastorate when war broke out in eastern Congo in October 1996. Rebels advanced and took ever increasing amounts of territory, separating the church and its intended pastor. Finally, 10 months later, the Begelas arrived in Bukavu, to find a living, vibrant church that not only survived a devastating war but was growing and had 10 baptismal candidates to present.

Jean de Dieu, a Rwandan orphan, now lives in the home of a member of the Mennonite Church of the Great Lakes and, sponsored by a U.S. Mennonite family, is an apprentice learning carpentry. *Krista Rigalo*

The Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference Winter Delegate Assembly will be Jan. 16-17, 1998, at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church in Phoenix. The theme for the event will be "Praying for Healing and Hope." For more information contact Donald Yoder at (602) 631-0816, or e-mail DEYoder@compuserve.com.

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Although Mennonite Disaster Service has been working in Detroit since July 2 tornadoes swept through the city, a shortage of volunteers has temporarily stalled repairs. During the weeks following the disaster, MDS averaged between 20 and 50 volunteers per week, but by the end of September they had only a handful of long-term volunteers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has received nearly 19,000 applications for assistance. Because the tornado swept through economically impoverished neighborhoods, many residents don't know what assistance is available or how to get it. "I didn't realize how bad the roof was until the bedroom walls began to swell, and I saw the rain run down the front doorway," says storm victim Anita Gist. With the onset of cooler weather, she admits to having turned on the heat, although she has no chimney. If you can volunteer, call (313) 964-2856.

The United Hmong Mennonite Church held a crusade in St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 11-17. Two other congregations, a mostly white Lutheran church and a black Pentecostal church, co-sponsored the event. Each night several Hmong responded to the altar call; many have requested home visits. (*The Northern Light*)

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Peace Mennonite Community Church, Aurora, Colo., dedicated a new building Aug. 24. Church members and volunteer labor from several states helped build the new facility. Mennonite Men gave the church a $50,000 Tenth Man grant. Peace Mennonite began in 1986 and has 111 members. *Leonard Wiebe*

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"Proclaiming the Word: A Symposium on Preaching in the Mennonite Tradition" will be held Feb. 22-24, 1998, at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Workshop topics will include "Preaching as Pastoral Care," "The Place of the Bible in Preaching," "The Place of Preaching in Worship," "Preaching on Difficult Topics and Texts" and "What Constitutes an Effective Sermon?" For more information call Dale Schrag at (316) 284-5356 or e-mail drs@bethelks.edu.

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A quilt that sold for a record $50,500 at the Virginia Mennonite Central Committee relief sale Sept. 27 was purchased by Henry Showalter of Harrisonburg, Va. Showalter said he bought the quilt "partially" on behalf of Greater Ministries International, a Tampa, Fla.-based organization that promises high returns on investments and claims to support missionaries. Pennsylvania has issued a cease-and-desist order against the organization. Securities investigators claim it is a pyramid scheme that targets Mennonite and Amish communities. An administrator at MCC said MCC has no choice but to receive the funds. "It would have been problematic not to complete the sale ... [MCC] is in a tight situation." (*Gospel Herald*)

as COE executive secretary/publisher completes a time of internal transition at COE," says Jeff Wright, Alta Loma, Calif., COE chair. "It prepares the Christian education and publishing ministries of the General Conference for the important task of integration, while maintaining our commitment to equip the church to communicate the gospel."

"I am challenged by the transitional phase of church life as we integrate with the Mennonite Church," Good says. "I am also aware of the need to further the mission of equipping the church to communicate the gospel. The vision of providing our products and services within and beyond our denomination is being realized."

MDS stretched by response to Red River floods

Winnipeg (MDS)—What is likely the largest disaster relief response in Canada for Mennonite Disaster Service has been precedent-setting.

MDS has acted as the umbrella organization coordinating the efforts of various organizations and the onslaught of volunteers that arrived as the floodwaters receded. This has placed MDS in a new role.

"Because MDS is the expert in disaster relief, we are very pleased to work alongside them and with them in this whole thing," says Mary Williams, executive director for Winnipeg Habitat for Humanity.

Although not a disaster relief organization, Habitat joined the effort to rebuild homes devastated by the massive flooding on the Red River last spring. Other groups working with MDS include the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Crossroads (a television outreach ministry) and dozens of other church and community groups.

Lowell Detweiler, MDS executive coordinator, says many other agencies didn't have the organized channels to enable them to respond quickly to the flood, but MDS did, and took a leadership role.

The enormity of the project—removing millions of sandbags, for instance—has also made it particularly taxing. Some estimates suggest the number of volunteers—though not total work days—under MDS in Manitoba has reached the levels of MDS volunteers in all of the United States so far this year. "I think [the number of volunteers] pushed [MDS] almost beyond [its] capabilities," Detweiler says.

And never before have so many of these volunteers come from out of province and from non-Mennonite backgrounds—about 75 percent on both counts. By the end of September, the number of volunteers multiplied by the number of days worked added up to an estimated 10,000 work days. MDS had worked at about 800 sites.

Those volunteers have gone from sandbag removal and cleanup into the rebuilding phase of response. By the end of September, MDS and the organizations under its umbrella were involved in rebuilding 46 houses.

MDS plans to continue work as long as weather permits this fall and then resume in spring.

Bruce Hildebrand

Umbrella: *Mennonite Disaster Service volunteer Krista Driedger, Kitchener, Ont., helps clean out a house south of Winnipeg that had three feet of water on the main floor.*

Syd Reimer, flood project coordinator, says he has been amazed how groups worked together and difficulties were overcome. "It was a blessing for me to see how everybody came on board. I don't think we let anybody down." *Carol Thiessen*

Manitoba thrift stores give more than $1 million

Winnipeg (MCC)—In Manitoba, 16 thrift stores contributed nearly $1.2 million to Mennonite Central Committee in 1997, a milestone that coincides with the 25th anniversary of the beginning of a movement that started in Manitoba and has spread throughout North America.

"It's a great way to celebrate 25 years," says Martha Klassen, coordinator of the Manitoba stores. She attributes the steady growth of revenue to the dedication and commitment of thousands of volunteers.

One is Eva Toews, 84, who works at the Steinbach MCC Thrift Shop three or four days a week. No job is too menial for Toews—such as sorting, matching and discarding socks.

"I don't like touching dirty socks, but it has to be done," she says. Why does she spend countless hours doing this work? "So that I can sleep at night. I know that somebody will have warm feet because I did what I could."

The first thrift shops opened in 1972 in response to reports that many North American clothes were not suitable for international relief projects and that shipping costs were high. It was suggested that used clothes be sold in local communities and the money raised be used for MCC relief and development work.

Four shops opened in Manitoba that year. Today there are 46 shops in Canada and 42 in the United States.

The shops are an important source of revenue for MCC, but the benefits of volunteers working together can't be measured in money, explains Klassen. "I see people from different faith traditions working together side by side. They are getting to know each other, becoming friends, sharing views and values with each other and living out their Christian faith." *Gladys Terichow*

Networking for peace

Linda Shelly (MCC)

Guatemala City (MCC)—From left, Laura Batz, Tita Galvez and Fidel Orellana review a case study of conflict during the first "Peacemakers" course offered here Sept. 11-14, sponsored by the Regional Network for Justice and Peace.

The network grew out of meetings among Central American Anabaptists interested in peace and justice, many from countries that have recently experienced armed conflict—El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

The "Peacemakers" program involves two years of courses. The Guatemala City seminar brought together some 20 participants from El Salvador and Guatemala to focus on "a contextual and conceptual framework for building peace." The seminar had earlier been given in Nicaragua and included participants from neighboring Costa Rica and Honduras.

Young adults are invited to attend Evangel '97, an international young adult mission and evangelism conference hosted by Global Disciples, in Atlanta Dec. 28, 1997 to Jan. 1, 1998. For more information contact Jeremy Leaman or Karen Groff at (717) 872-7404; fax (717) 872-6064; e-mail globalD@compuserve.com; website: www.GlobalD.org.

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"Invitation and Belonging: Congregational Rituals and Rhythms" is the theme for the annual Pastors' Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 26-30, 1998. Participants will explore the meaning of belonging to the faith community and will look at how worship rituals and other rhythms of congregational life function as an invitation to faith and belonging. For more information contact Bev Sawatzky or Janeen Bertsche Johnson at 1-800-964-2627 or (219) 296-6207. *Susan E. Janzen*

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Toys 'R' Us, the leading retailer of children's toys in the United States, has been bullying manufacturers, says the Federal Trade Commission. The company, which controls 30 percent of the toy market, threatens to discontinue carrying toys from manufacturers that also supply its competitors, such as Price Club and Sam's Club. A Toys 'R' Us spokesperson says the company can sell or not sell whatever it chooses. Christian Peacemaker Teams asks Toys 'R' Us to choose not to sell violent toys. Groups can help spread the message that violence is not child's play. Congregations, peace centers and elementary schools are encouraged to visit Toys 'R' Us to note their inventory of violent toys and video games, form a delegation to express concerns to the store management and invite them to remove the toys from their shelves, and organize a teach-in at a local Toys 'R' Us store during the holiday season. (*Christian Peacemaker Teams*)

The 11th Annual Weekend for Music and Worship Leaders will be held Jan. 9-11, 1998, at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. The weekend will include a special tribute to Mary Oyer. For information, contact LMCC, Route 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666; 1-800-839-1021; (412) 423-2056.

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Chinese Mennonite Church in Vancouver recently celebrated its 20th anniversary with a fund-raising banquet for its seniors home. The two-year-old seniors facility will be expanded to accommodate 50 occupants. The congregation has about 180 members; 130 students also attend Chinese school at the church. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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John Paul Lederach will be the featured speaker and workshop leader for "Our Journey Toward Reconciliation," Jan. 30-31, 1998, at Concord College, Winnipeg. Conference sponsors include Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Concord College, Menno Simons College and Steinbach Bible College. For more information, contact Menno Simons College, 380 Spence St., Third Floor, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9; (204) 786-9895.

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The Peace and Anabaptist Library at Menno House, Manhattan, N.Y., was dedicated Sept. 20. The library grew out of a wish to provide resources that present a Mennonite interpretation of the gospel and the Christian life as one of peacemaking. One thousand volumes, both popular and scholarly, were collected. The majority of the books on Anabaptist theology and Mennonite life in the United States came from Gerald Studer, long-time Atlantic Coast and Franconia Conference minister. A sizable grant from the General Board of the Mennonite Church has made possible recent publications in Spanish and English. Still needed are books on nonviolence and peacemaking. *John Rempel*

Study of Hopis yields lessons for mission work

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—A meeting between an anthropologist and a Mennonite pastor helped lead to a Ph.D. dissertation topic and some food for thought for Mennonite and other Christian mission workers among the Hopis.

Flagstaff, Ariz., anthropologist Diane Notarianni has traced the work of Mennonite missionaries on the Hopi Reservation in Arizona. Her research (focused on Third Mesa and particularly the village of Oraibi, between 1890 and 1940) explores the conversion of some Hopis from their traditional religion to a fundamentalist form of Christianity as presented by General Conference Mennonite Church missionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

"Throughout this whole 50 years, there were many missionaries who came and went, but very few Hopis ever converted," Notarianni says. "In fact, it was less than 2 percent of the population of Oraibi. The Mennonites spent a lot of money, they built facilities, they were there. So my research revolves around answering these questions: Why did so few Hopis (Oraibis) convert to the Mennonite religion? And then, of the few Oraibis who converted, why did those particular people do so?"

Notarianni had met Elmer Myron, a fourth-generation Hopi Christian who now serves as pastor of the Intertribal Mennonite Fellowship in Phoenix, when she was working on her master's thesis. "I asked her if she would think about possibly doing some research on Mennonites up on the Hopi reservation," says Myron. He and his family were a primary help to Notarianni in gathering data and arranging contacts with other Hopi Christians.

Notarianni's extensive research included visits to the Mennonite Library and Archives in North Newton, Kan., where she read thousands of letters from the missionaries to the mission board.

What Notarianni concluded was that the Mennonite missionaries made some miscalculated assumptions based on their own worldviews.

"The first missionary, Heinrich Voth, spent a lot of time trying to understand Hopi indigenous religion, in the hopes that would give him understanding on how to convert Hopis," says Notarianni. "I went in with some operating hypotheses: that he was wrong, first of all—that it wasn't Hopi religion that's important, but what was important was what underlies Hopi religion. And what underlies it are some fundamental aspects of Hopi life that are seen through the principles of kinship and social relations.

"To understand Hopi society we have to understand kinship and the social relationships that emerged from kinship principles."

Notarianni identified the main Hopi kinship principle as matrilineality. "Descent and social relations are recognized as being more important and more fundamental through a line of women. Property is inherited through women, unlike our society, and most daily interactions are through women. Women in essence uphold a model for behavior."

"[The Mennonite missionaries] failed to access women and their social relationships."

Diane Notarianni

The Mennonite missionaries, on the other hand, operated from a worldview that was patriarchally oriented, that recognized men as important. "So what they did," says Notarianni, "was to go after individual men, and by doing that they failed to access women and their social relationships. Hopi men didn't have the power to influence other people in the same way, they didn't have the power to influence their wives, and they didn't have the power to influence their children."

Elmer Myron confirmed that his own road to conversion was through the path of matrilineal kinship. He and his wife, Nadenia, also a Hopi Christian, have been involved in church planting for the past 10 years.

Regarding the implications of Notarianni's research on outreach methods to Hopis today, Myron says, "It's helping us look at some of the Hopi cultural ways as strengths to the Hopis. It can be helpful to the church to understand that yes, we may have our message, but we have to look at the influential people in the culture." *Cynthia Snider*

Kenya worker looks at culture through music

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—The "matatu" (public transport van) was crowded when Mennonite Central Committee worker Annetta Miller squeezed into a seat. Traveling to rehearse with the Nairobi Orchestra, she opened her conductor's score of Brahms' *Requiem* to review the difficult parts. A woman seated next to Miller, seeing the pages dotted with musical notation, whispered, "Ni uchawi." It's witchcraft.

Miller counters this story with another from nearly 60 years earlier when her missionary parents first arrived in Africa. Upon hearing the participatory responses and rhythmic drums and tones characteristic of African music, they too designated unfamiliar music "witchcraft."

Since then, Miller has accumulated 40 years of experience living in Tanzania, Sudan and Kenya, studying and teaching others how to appreciate their own musical heritage as well as that of other cultures.

Miller was formally educated in the Kodaly philosophy of music, which holds that music education should be founded on one's own cultural music. She says the values of African culture are reflected in the music.

However, even with her 40 years' experience, Miller insists she does not possess the full view of the cultural insider. "I'm just beginning to scratch the surface," she says.

Yet her extended exposure to and interaction with African culture has lent insight into better understanding and appreciating the music. She explains that African culture places value on the human being—on inclusiveness, participation and cooperation.

In Africa, Miller says, music provides the "social glue" that holds relationships together. The call-and-response songs typical of sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate the importance of participation. In many southern African languages, the word for "response" in these songs is "vuma," "to agree."

Music also holds functional value within African communities, "to the degree that many African languages have no distinct word for it," Miller says. "It is simply part of the human environment."

This contrasts with the Western view, in which music becomes a performance that showcases the soloist. Also, Western culture views music, or the ability to sing, as a gift some have and others do not. "In Africa," Miller says, "it's assumed that everyone can sing."

Since January, Miller has been teaching music at Daystar University in Nairobi. Before that, she taught music for 18 years at Kenyatta University, also in Nairobi. Her classroom provides opportunities for her students to musically venture into other cultures. For her African students, this involves being introduced to notated music from the West as well as helping them appreciate their own musical heritage.

She is currently working with her students to compile, analyze and publish more than 400 Kenyan folksongs for educational purposes. She hopes this effort will provide an alternative to the Western-based approach in music education and help Africans look to their own musical heritage as a base for studying music.

"I want to be affirming of their culture because colonialism and the missionary enterprise too often denigrated it," she says. "I can help them understand their music in a way they themselves cannot."

Miller sees her role in affirming cultural differences through music as her own approach to peacemaking. "Much of the world's conflicts are about not understanding others' cultures," she says. "This is a tiny handle on peace." *Delphine Martin*

Howard Zehr

Social glue: *Villagers in Sau, southern Sudan, dance to the beat of a drum. Mennonite Central Committee Kenya worker Annetta Miller says her approach to peacemaking is to affirm cultural differences through music.*

Trenton (Ohio) Mennonite Church celebrated its 100th anniversary Sept. 6. The area was originally populated in 1819 by Amish and Mennonite families from the Alsace region of France; two congregations eventually grew together to form the church in 1897. Current membership is 138. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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UNICEF estimates that 250,000 children under the age of 18—some as young as 5—served in 33 armed conflicts worldwide in 1995 and 1996. It is advocating the adoption of an "Option Protocol" to the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. The protocol would raise the minimum age of recruitment into the military to 18. The United States does not accept 18 years as a minimum age for military service, says the *Defense Monitor*. The U.S. position, which appears to be mainly dictated by the Pentagon, is that age 17 is more convenient. The United States and Somalia are the only two countries which have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. (*Peace and Social Justice Center Newsletter*)

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Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, made national news in the days following the Oct. 14 announcement of its expulsion from Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church. Germantown accepts gays and lesbians in committed, monogamous relationships as members. An article appeared in the Oct. 17 *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and Germantown pastor Richard Lichty was interviewed on National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition Saturday" Oct. 18. Both the radio and newspaper interviews asked about the implications for integration (Germantown is also affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church). That question is likely to come up when the General Boards of the two denominations meet Nov. 20-22 in Denver.

Record

MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
MVS—Mennonite Voluntary Service
VORP—Victim Offender Reconciliation Program

Recent state funding cuts have ended a Bluffton (Ohio) College program for inmates at North Central Correctional Institution. The college had offered a bachelor's degree program at the facility; by the second year 135 students participated. Ohio has ended funding for baccalaureate degree programs for incarcerated people, so Bluffton now offers one- and two-year certificates in business studies. This fall 84 students are enrolled in the program.

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Exploring urban ministry in Chicago, a course on youth ministry and a look at the place of hymns in worship are just three of the options available during interterm, Jan. 5-23, 1998, at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Interterm provides an opportunity for pastors, lay leaders, teachers and others who may not be able to enroll for an extended time to join the AMBS community for one to three weeks of intensive study. Seven courses of three credit hours each will be offered. Registration deadline is Dec. 12. For information, contact Andrew Kreider, (219) 296-3726; 1-800-964-2627; e-mail admissions@ambs.edu.

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An 18-year-old goat herder, Ezequiel Hernandez Jr., was killed in May in the Rio Grande River valley by a U.S. Marine who was part of an anti-drug-smuggling mission. In mid-August, a West Texas grand jury did not indict the Marine, saying it was confused about some of the evidence. The Marine claimed Hernandez fired at a four-member camouflage-dressed Marine team. Authorities haven't indicated whether Ezequiel's gun was actually fired. Daniel Bovine, local justice of the peace, says the Marines "seemed awestruck that there was so much traffic coming across [the river]. They assumed it was all illegal ... [but] people have been crossing here for hundreds of years." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

MINISTERS

Menno Epp retired as lead pastor at Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church June 15.

Wendy Janzen is youth pastor at Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church.

John A. Toews was ordained as pastor at Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church Sept. 28.

Ken Tse was ordained as pastor at Edmonton Chinese Church Sept. 7.

Dawn Yoder Harms is associate pastor at Akron (Pa.) Church.

WORKERS

Eleanor Epp-Stobbe will be women's network coordinator for MCC Canada beginning in January.

Mary Froese, Grace Church, Winkler, Man., is beginning a three-year MCC term in Winkler as a manager of the Ten Thousand Villages store.

Floy and **John Lapp**, Birch Grove Church, Port Allegany, Pa., began one-year MVS terms Aug. 11. Floy is a clerk at the Et Cetera Shop; John is a carpenter for Interfaith Housing in Hutchinson, Kan.

Lisa Loeppky, Springstein (Man.) Church, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 working with cerebral palsy patients in Fresno, Calif.

Helen Myron, Bacavi Community Fellowship, Kykotsmovi, Ariz., is beginning a one-year MCC term in Bacavi as a service intern.

Gerhard and **Katharina Neufeld**, Sargent Avenue Church, Winnipeg, are beginning three-year MCC terms in Croatia, working in rural development.

Yvonne Peifer, Akron (Pa.) Church, is beginning a three-year MCC term in Akron as children's orientation assistant coordinator.

Melita Penner, First Church, Saskatoon, is beginning a four-year MCC term in Saskatoon as the provincial warehouse manager for Ten Thousand Villages.

Marc Rempel, First Church, Newton, Kan., began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as an administrative assistant and mediator with Mediation Services for Victims and Offenders in Seattle.

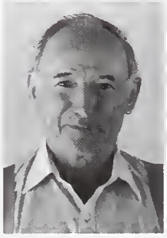
Jochen Ricken, Linz am Rhein, Germany, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as an office manager for Plowsharing Crafts, St. Louis.

Mary Mae Schwartzentruber is interim executive secretary for Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada.

Andrea Shantz, Elmira (Ont.) Church, began a one-year MVS term June 1 as a child development special-

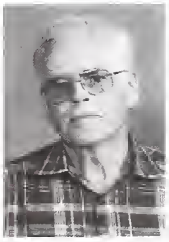
Froese

F. Lapp


J. Lapp

Loeppky

Myron


G. Neufeld

K. Neufeld

Penner

Rempel

Ricken

ist with Newhouse in Kansas City.

Heidi Sommer, Grace Church, Pandora, Ohio, began a two-year MVS term Aug. 11 as a teacher's aide at Edgewood Children's Home in St. Louis.

Kim Thiessen, Foothills Church, Calgary, is beginning an MCC term in Calgary as refugee assistance coordinator.

Tim Webb, Abilene, Texas, began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as a resource developer for Westlake Giving Tree in Seattle.

David Wieand, Waterford Church, Goshen, Ind., began a one-year MVS term Aug. 11 as an intake worker for Catholic Charities in San Francisco.

David Wilson, Lebo, Kan., began a two-year MVS term Aug. 11 as VORP director in Boulder, Colo.

Joanna Wilson, First Church, Edmonton, Alta., began a one-year MVS term Aug. 26 as project assistant for Puget Soundkeepers Alliance, Seattle.

Jeffrey T. Yoder, Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., is beginning a three-year MCC term in Irian Jaya, Indonesia, as a university teacher and rural development consultant.

Shantz

Sommer

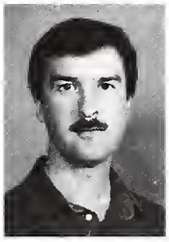
Thiessen

Webb

Wieand

D. Wilson

J. Wilson


Yoder

Former President George Bush has spoken at several events sponsored by the Unification Church. Last November Bush gave a speech at the opening of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Buenos Aires, Argentina, newspaper. Bush praised Moon, also founder of *The Washington Times* newspaper, for fostering "sanity." In September 1995, Bush gave several speeches in Asia for Moon gatherings. Former *Newsweek* correspondent Robert Parry reports that sources close to the Unification Church claim Bush has received millions of dollars for his appearances. Parry says that although Moon has secretly spent billions of dollars to influence U.S. policy over almost 25 years, this "has gone virtually unmentioned amid the current controversy over Asian donations to U.S. politicians." (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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We want your most memorable **article**, **photo** or **illustration** from your years of reading **The Mennonite**.
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The Mission and Service Commission of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada invites applications for the position of **mission minister**. Responsibilities: (1) Promote the vision for mission in MCEC congregations, (2) give guidance to new churches and projects, (3) resource the commission and the projects and congregations it supports. Qualifications: seminary education, significant pastoral or mission-related experience, some familiarity with Canadian Mennonite congregations. Starting time negotiable; available spring 1998. Application deadline: **Nov. 30**.

Direct applications or inquiries to **Executive Secretary MCEC, 4489 King St. E, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2; (519) 650-3806**; fax **(519) 650-3947**; e-mail **maryburk@mcec.on.ca**.

Bluffton College announces a full-time, tenure-track position in **education** beginning September 1998. Rank dependent on qualifications; doctorate required. The successful candidate will hold an advanced degree in elementary education; evidence of effective teaching crucial and graduate-level teaching preferred. Responsibilities include teaching graduate and undergraduate education courses in foundation, curriculum methods, classroom management and educational research as well as placement and supervision of student teachers. Consideration of applications begins **Dec. 5** and continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at **http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac**.

Send letter of interest, resume or vita, three letters of reference and official transcripts to **Amy Tabler, Assistant to the VP and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, Ohio 45817-1196**. EOE

Bluffton College announces a full-time, **chief librarian** position beginning September 1998. Responsibilities include leadership and coordination of planning, budgeting, managing the collections and staffing of Musselman Library, including the Mennonite Historical Library and the college archives, as well as other collections on campus. The position involves directing ongoing efforts to advance and integrate the use of technology, representing library matters to administration, serving as liaison with library publics, and interacting effectively with faculty and others in promoting the mission of the library. Graduate degree from an ALA-accredited program required; Ph.D. preferred. Administrative and supervisory experience in an academic setting expected. Position has all the rights and privileges of other faculty members except tenure. Consideration of applications begins **Dec. 5**, and continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at **http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac**.

Submit letter of application, resume or vita, three letters of reference and official transcripts to **Amy Tabler, Assistant to the VP and Dean of Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196**. EOE

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Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to **William Hawk, VP and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802**; e-mail **dean@emu.edu**.

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Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan., a large, active congregation serving a rural community, seeks **full-time lead pastor** with a commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, passion for the gospel and vision for outreach. Experience in leadership/administration beneficial.

Applicants are invited to submit resume and request for information to **Karl Brubaker, Pastoral Search Team, P.O. Box 71, Goessel, KS 67053; (316) 327-8216;** e-mail **karlb@hesston.edu**.

Tabor Mennonite Church, rural Newton, Kan., invites application for our newly open **co-pastoral team ministry** position. It is our sense that God is calling a co-pastoral team to our congregation because of our previous success with this model and the ability of co-pastors to blend family and professional goals in this 1.25 FTE position. We are committed to the Anabaptist vision of the power of a congregation of adult believers relating to our community in peace, hope and care for all.

Please contact **Bill Unruh, (316) 367-2411** or **Ray Frey (316) 367-8304**, co-chairs, for further details.

Flatrock Mennonite Church, an established rural congregation located in Flatrock, B.C., 30 miles east of Fort St. John, is seeking a **pastor**. Position open immediately.

Send resume to **Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Brad Giesbrecht, Box 179, Cecil Lake, BC V0C 1G0; (250) 781-3580.**

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applications for the position of **director of food, grants and material resources**. This is a full-time position based in Winnipeg. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and non-violent peacemaking. Applicants should have previous overseas development experience, basic understanding of MCC's international programs, and willingness to travel both internationally and domestically.

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact **Marsha Jones or Marv Frey at MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg MB R3E 5K9; (204) 261-6381**; e-mail **prs@mennonitecc.ca**. Application deadline is **Nov. 15.**

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Hilda Duarte was at a Guatemala City market when she saw a group start to beat a 17-year-old caught stealing. She threw herself on his bleeding body, even as she saw people bringing gasoline to burn him. "If you throw gas on him, you'll have to throw it on me, too," she said. One of the men yelling to kill them both attended her church. "How can we preach the gospel if we don't know how to love and forgive?" she asked him.

Hilda's courageous faith saved the teenager. Her decision to guard his life grew out of her studies at SEMILLA, a Latin American Anabaptist Seminary and MCC partner.

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Reviews

BOOKS

THE FAMILY STORIES

The Storekeeper's Daughter: A Memoir *by Katie Funk Wiebe (Herald Press, 1997, 222 pages, $9.99 U.S./$14.25 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Ruth Unrau, North Newton, Kan.

This story of growing up in northern Saskatchewan focuses on the importance of storytelling, the immigrant experience and the stress of growing up Mennonite in a non-Mennonite village. Not incidental are the stories of surviving the Depression in Blaine Lake and of the pain and pleasure of being the storekeeper's daughter.

Wiebe's father told stories of his life in Russia before, during and following the 1917 revolution. "[They] showed me how values become living truth in another time and setting. ... Equally important, his stories gave me permission to tell my story," Wiebe writes.

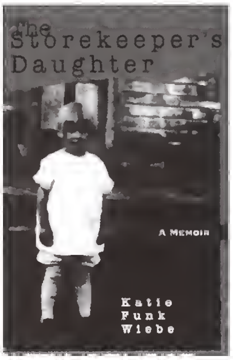
For her parents, the early years in Russia had been pleasant. Then came the terror of the revolution, when the White Army, the Red Army and the Nestor Makhno bands rampaged through the villages, followed by the hunger years when Jacob Funk dried berries and hunted gophers to keep his family alive.

Finally came rumors of help from American Mennonites, an organization that eventually became Mennonite Central Committee. And amazingly the carloads of food, clothing and implements arrived, saving the lives of the Funk family and others in the village.

Even though the spring of 1923 was more promising, Wiebe's parents wanted to go to a place free of hunger and terror. "But in Saskatchewan, the land of promise, some of the old conditions returned. Hunger and need had followed hard on their heels to Canada."

Wiebe is referring to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Those were years of drought and lack of money, but without the terror and famine of the earlier decade in Russia. People made do with clothing made of flour sacks, old socks for mittens, a once-a-summer ice cream cone.

Wiebe puzzled over who she was. Dutch, German, English, Russian, Ukrainian? But her schoolmates and family defined her as Mennonite. In the Mennonite church across the river, they followed Mennonite rules. But in winter, the family attended the United Church in Blaine Lake, where rules were not so strict: They could go skating on Sunday. Figuring out what being Mennonite meant became an absorbing pursuit.



While the Russian stories form the structure of this memoir, the asides of family life and fun, and the suspense of waiting for the next chapter in Wiebe's father's story, make for entertaining reading.

We can be grateful for the lives of this storekeeper father and his wife and to their daughter for telling the family stories. I only wish she had included family photos.

HOPE AND CHALLENGE

Complete Evangelism: The Luke-Acts Model *by Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid (Herald Press, 1997, 184 pages, $14.99 U.S./$21.50 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Mary H. Schertz, Elkhart, Ind.

For a long time we haven't known what to do about the long-standing schism between mission-minded folks and social action-minded folks. Those of us who attend churchwide meetings where these issues arise know all too well that there are different vocabularies, different attitudes, perhaps even different personalities. Far too often, the only commonality among these folks is a hide-bound assurance that their priority is the only right priority—yielding robust heat and puny light.

In this book, Maynard-Reid does what many have promised. He presents an integration of proclaiming the good news and enacting the good news that he calls "complete evangelism." He argues that the essence of proclaiming the good news is being an advocate for the poor—both materially and politically—and that the essence of action for social change is the message of Jesus Christ.

Maynard-Reid provides a succinct and helpful historical overview of the

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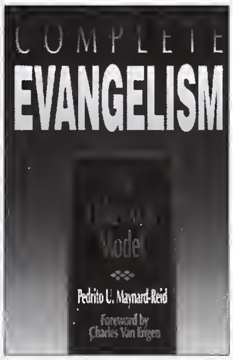
schism between missions and social action. He traces the dynamics of this debate from the early 19th century, when "Evangelical Christians were at the forefront of social reform worldwide," through the 1920s, when "fundamentalists had made an absolute and rigid dicotomy between evangelism and social action," to the 1990s, where "the relation of personal salvation to social transformation is still not yet resolved."

The author rejects a hermeneutical method that uses the Bible selectively to underwrite certain mission strategies, a method that has often been myopic and self-serving. Instead he offers a contextual model that takes account of changing realities, both in the New Testament and in our own time. By understanding how the gospel writers, in this case Luke, grappled with the mission at hand, we can better understand how to grapple with our own mission situations.



Chapters 3 and 4 are the heart of the book. Maynard-Reid rereads Luke-Acts to figure out what evangelism means there and compare it to contemporary, popular concepts of the term. He finds that there are two kinds of evangelism in Luke-Acts: to the poor, the good news of hope, and to the rich, the good news of challenge, particularly with respect to how they treat the poor. He looks at what hope and challenge mean concretely by working them through major theological emphases of Luke such as the reign of God, salvation, repentance, conversion and the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Maynard-Reid revisits the themes of hope and challenge, this time relating the concept of complete evangelism, derived from Luke-Acts, to the questions of contemporary missions. The aim of evangelism, he contends, is "the establishment of shalom." Part of personal salvation is to participate with Christ in redeeming and transforming our realities.

I recommend this book strongly. It is helpful, concise and clear. More importantly, it is for every one of us who thinks, secretly or openly, that either missions or social action is really more important than the other.

Resources

● ● ▼

• **Comanches and Mennonites on the Oklahoma Plains** by Marvin E. Kroeker (Kindred Productions, 1997, $18.95 U.S./$22.95 Cdn.) is the story of Mennonite Brethren A.J. and Magdalena Becker and the Post Oak Mission.

• **Beyond the News: Parenting Adolescents** is a 55-min. video from Mennonite Media that includes interviews with teenagers from New York City, youth ministry leaders and parenting specialists. A study guide accompanies the video. For ordering information call 1-800-999-3534.

• **How Do You Spell God?** is a 27-minute video featuring children's responses to questions like, Who is God? What is prayer? What is your soul? Contact HBO Studio Productions, 120A E. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010; (219) 512-7800.

• **Counseling Troubled Older Adults** by Harold G. Koenig and Andrew J. Weaver (Abingdon, 1997, $32.95 U.S.) is a handbook for pastors and religious caregivers.

• **Wisdom Is Where You Find It or Where It Finds You** by James I. Warren (Upper Room, 1997, $10.95 U.S.) contains 20 brief stories that celebrate unlikely sources of wisdom.

• **Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church** by Danny E. Morris and Charles M. Olsen (Upper Room, 1997, $11.95 U.S.) offers a way for congregations to make decisions based on discerning God's will rather than struggling with parliamentary procedures.

• **Then Shall Your Light Rise: Spiritual Formation and Social Witness** by Joyce Hollyday (Upper Room, 1997, $9.95 U.S.) combines personal experience, biblical text and reflection to offer a new model for Christian living.

• **Discipline & Recovery: 100 Meditations for Persons in Recovery** by Bill and Lisa Crowell (Upper Room, 1997, $9.95 U.S.) contains scriptural meditations for people recovering from addiction.

• **Welcome All Wonders: A Composer's Journey** by J.A.C. Redford (Baker Book House, 1997, $18.99 U.S.) recounts Redford's struggle from Mormonism to Christianity. Redford has composed music for many movies and TV shows, including *Oliver and Company*, *St. Elsewhere* and *A Trip to Bountiful*.

• **The Family of God: Helping Preadolescents Respond to Racial Stereotypes** is a video and five-session study for 8- to 12-year-olds that looks at name-calling, toys and the media. Available for $25 U.S. postpaid from Crossroads Ministry, 600 21st St., Racine, WI 53403; (414) 636-8583; fax (414) 636-9058.

• **The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church and School** by Dr. Tom Phillips and Bob Norsworthy (Bethany House, 1997, $9.99 U.S.) gives advice on dealing with cultural differences and offering practical help to a guest from another culture.

• **Subversive Spirituality** by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 1997, $18 U.S.) contains articles reflecting on the overlooked facets of the spiritual life.

• **Spiritual Life in the Congregation: A Guide for Retreats** by Rueben P. Job (Upper Room, 1997, $9.95 U.S.) can be used for churchwide, youth, action-oriented and private retreats. The book offers models, daily schedules and discussion topics.

• **Visions of Jesus: Direct Encounters from the New Testament to Today** by Phillip H. Wiebe (Oxford University Press, 1997, $30 U.S.) gives accounts of visions of Christ seen in contemporary times.

• **Seventy Times Seven: The Power of Forgiveness** by Johann Christoph Arnold (Plough, 1997, $13) draws on the experiences of ordinary people to create a testimony to the healing power of forgiveness.

Associate editor for marketing and promotion

Associate editor for marketing and promotion for *The Mennonite*, the new publication for an integrated Mennonite church. This quarter-time position requires a college degree and some experience in marketing and promotion work. Duties include working with the editor of the new magazine to plan and implement campaigns for both new and renewing subscribers. Relocation not necessary. Application deadline: **Nov. 30.**

Contact **J. Lorne Peachey at (412) 887-8500, ext. 250,** or e-mail **JLPeachey@aol.com.**

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Editorial

Casting out fear

Mark 7 and Matthew 15 contain a story that fascinates me: about Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician woman (called "the Canaanite woman" in Matthew).

Having made a declaration overturning traditional Jewish purity law (Mark 7:9-23), Jesus slips away to the Gentile side of the Sea of Galilee to try and get some quiet time. But the Syro-Phoenician woman, whose little daughter is possessed by a demon, seeks Jesus out and begs him to heal her child. Jesus comes across as downright rude, not to mention completely forgetful of what he had recently said about defilement, when he tells the woman that it's not right to take the children's (usually interpreted as the Jews') food and throw it to the dogs (likely referring to the Gentiles, and an insult).

But the woman is neither silenced nor deterred. In fact, her comeback earns her the distinction of being the only person recorded in Mark as having won an argument with Jesus. "Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs," she says. Jesus, amazed, tells her that when she goes home she will find her daughter healed.

A lot like us: This story presents a picture of Jesus that we don't find anywhere else. This is about the closest Jesus comes to being a lot like us. How many of us—from the pulpit, in a paper, article, letter to the editor or speech, or during ordinary conversation—have made statements in the abstract about what we believe, and then, when faced with a real-life situation, acted completely contrary?

That's what Jesus did here. He had just said it is what we do that makes us clean or unclean—that following the law to the letter while acting without love is not part of what it means to live in God's kingdom. And then here is this Gentile woman in his face, asking him for what he thinks God has told him to reserve for the Jews.

This story initially intrigued me because of the Syro-Phoenician woman's chutzpah and the love for her daughter that was great enough to cast out her fear of going against conventions and taboos of her time (women speaking to men, Gentiles speaking to Jews—never mind asking for a favor!). But I have become interested in what the story has to tell us about Jesus as well.

He thought he knew what was right, and what he was supposed to do. And then this face-to-face encounter with a living, breathing woman in anguish over her beloved child's condition changed him. If he meant what he said about what one does being the proof of one's purity or lack of it, then love demanded that he give this woman what she sought, and that his gospel message be open to Gentiles as well as Jews.

City on a Hill: When I think about this story, I think about folks in the Mennonite churches in Vancouver that received funds from the Commission on Home Ministries for this year's City on a Hill grant (see pages 3-10). In the last 10 to 15 years, the huge influx of immigrants there has caused rapid changes in neighborhoods, including ones that used to be all-German. It'scary when you like things the way they are but then they begin to alter in ways you can't control. A natural human response is to try to hold onto the traditions and trappings of the past.

That's happening in Vancouver, of course, as well as countless other places. But what the City on a Hill stories show is that there are also Mennonites who are willing to cast out their fear of change and reach out to people who are different. I don't have statistics, but I am convinced that personal contact has had a lot to do with it. When one-on-one conversations happen, "they" become no longer strangers and a threat but people with faces and scars and stories and dreams.

Heartbreak: This is what makes the recent "casting out" of Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, from the Mennonite Church (see Oct. 28 issue, page 13) heartbreaking. It was not done face-to-face but by anonymous, mail-in ballot. Many of those afraid of Germantown because it welcomes gay and lesbian members in covenanted, monogamous relationships remain locked in their fear because they have not talked face-to-face with their fellow human beings who happen to have a different sexual orientation.

There can be no healing without dialogue—and no dialogue without two parties. Jesus, our example for so much else, also modeled this and showed he was open to God's Spirit changing him. The City on a Hill churches are following his lead. What about the rest of us? *Melanie A. Zuercher*

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For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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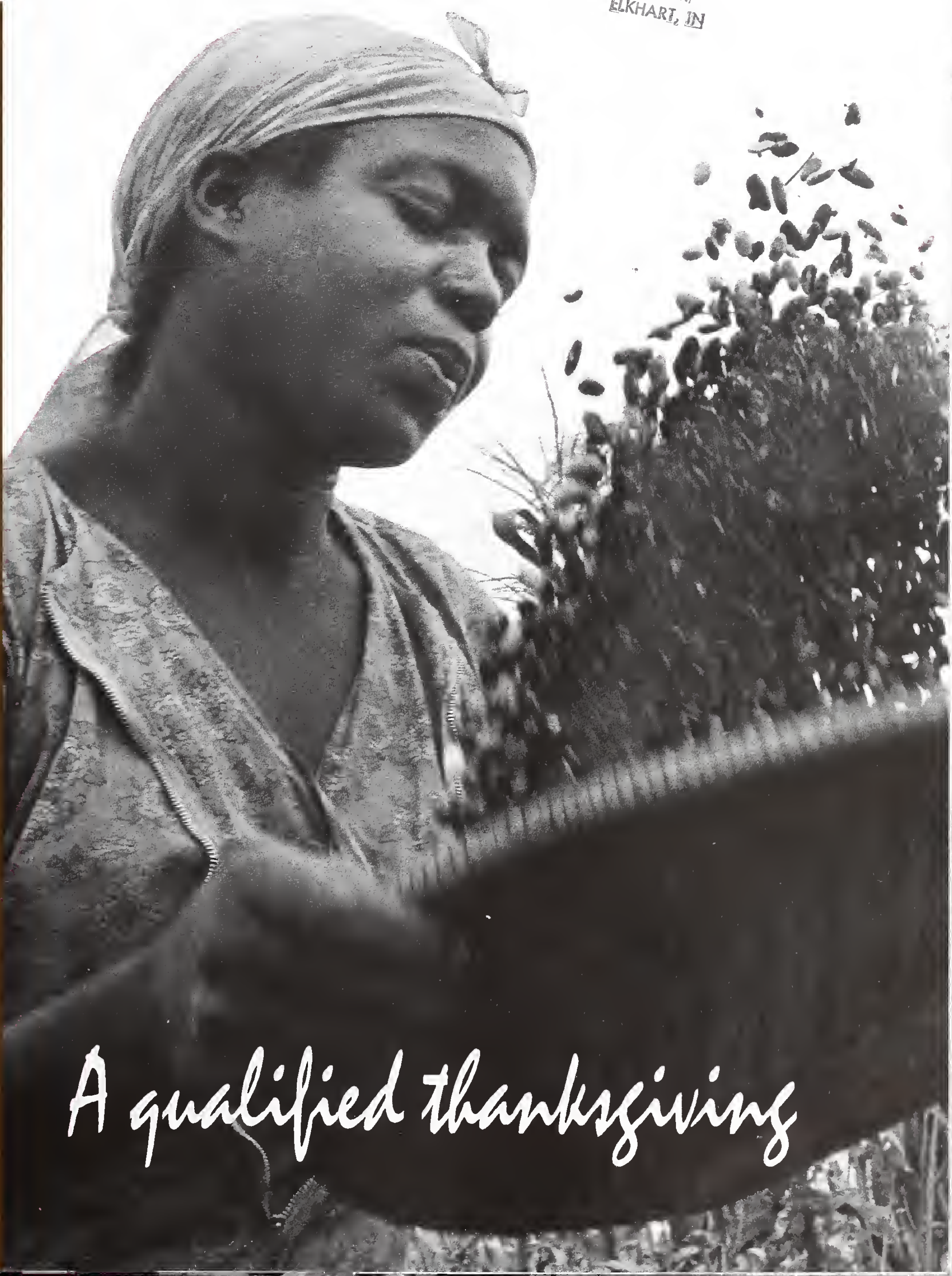


A qualified thanksgiving

Prologue

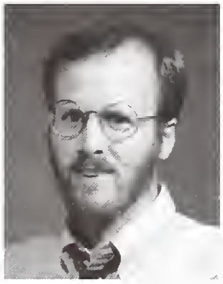
Thanksgiving was always a special holiday for me growing up. More than any other time of year, it was the day when the majority of us tried to gather at my parents' house. I come from a large family (seven children), so we often had large gatherings and plenty of food.

I say this to emphasize that with this issue I don't wish to spoil your Thanksgiving celebration. At the same time, the first two articles in this issue ask us to think about why and for what we are giving thanks.

Dave Schrock-Shenk (page 3) asks us to look at our abundance, where some of it comes from and what it has cost those who helped produce it. Our giving thanks may also require some seeking justice.

David Radcliff (page 6) questions the meaning of the table grace many of us sing, "Oh, the Lord's been good to me. …" He looks at the biblical meaning of God's blessing, which is intended for all, not just me.

Jean Janzen's poem (page 8) recalls a famous date in U.S. history and juxtaposes innocent imagination and the violence of war.



Don Steelberg offers a novel idea for bringing people to Christ (page 11).

J.B. Miller looks back on more than three years of writing his Fiscal Health column and asks what he has learned (page 12).

Have a joyful and thoughtful Thanksgiving. *gh*

Next issue: Christmas stories

Cover: Photo by Peter Williams/WCC

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Tainted thanks

Why I won't thank God for all my things this Thanksgiving

Dave Schrock-Shenk

When I was a child, my family always attended the Thanksgiving worship service at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. We listened to sermons and prayed, and we always sang the hymn "Praise to God, Immortal Praise."

We thanked God for everything we enjoyed—our religious freedom, healthy bodies, close families and all our things.

"Thank you, God, for the material blessings you have given us," we would pray. "Help us use our material abundance to bless others."

Those prayers seemed right. We had worked hard and lived frugally. God had created the earth that many of us farmed. And didn't Jesus tell his disciples God would supply all their needs if they sought God's kingdom? Our needs were well met. So wasn't God responsible for our material goods?

Sometimes I wish I could recapture the certainty of those childhood prayers. But this Thanksgiving, even though I'm quite wealthy, I do not plan to thank God for all my things.

There's blood in our sugar: Experiences in the Philippines began to erode my belief that people have material abundance because of God's blessing.

During our term of service there my wife, Carolyn, and I often visited the province of Negros, where hundreds of thousands of people worked on sugarcane plantations.

Once we met a young woman who stopped to buy supper for herself and her three children at a small grocery store—a small tin of sardines and a half-pound of rice with the 25 cents she had earned for hoeing sugarcane for 12 hours in the tropical sun.

Standard economic theory calls this a fair price, since it was "what the market would bear." But this woman with little education and no other job skills was "willing" to work all day for 25 cents only because if she did not, her children would starve.

Although God created the earth this woman was tending, God was not responsible for the starvation wages she received. Nor was God responsible for the handsome profit the plantation owner received for selling the sugarcane she and others had grown. There was sin in the economic relationship that determined her wages and his profit.

The plunder of the poor: My experiences since returning to North America have further eroded my belief in the "material goods are a blessing from God" equation.

Carolyn, our son Caleb and I live in a beautiful row house in Lancaster city. Our house allows us to offer hospitality to our family and friends. It feels like the fulfillment of God's promise in Isaiah 65:21-22 that God's children will "build houses and live in them."

Yet most of the families on our block do not own the houses they live in, even though many are also Christian. And many of the houses are shoddy—with peeling paint, leaking roofs and windows that do not keep out winter winds. Every month tenants pay exorbitant rents to their landlords, most of whom live in Lancaster's

I thank God Caleb will have food this winter. But are my cheap peaches a "blessing from God" when the woman who raised the sugar I used to preserve them doesn't earn enough to buy decent suppers for her children?

Less than an adequate wage: *The small amount of money this Honduran girl earns sorting bananas that will be exported by a multinational company allows her to contribute to her family's finances. However, the need to work robs her of the chance to get an education that would allow her to some day earn a decent livelihood.*

Dave Schrock-Shenk (MCC)

Being content to live with enough in a society designed to provide me with too much is not easy. We need the help of family and friends, and the counsel and wisdom of the wider church.

suburbs. Many of these landlords are Christian. Some are Mennonites.

Last year while Carolyn and I were renovating our house, we needed appliances. While buying a microwave oven at a yard sale, I talked with the woman selling it. Upon discovering we were both Christians, she shared an experience she said was an answer to prayer.

"When my husband lost his job we worried about how we would survive," she said. "But we used his pension money to buy properties in Lancaster city. Now we have a good income. God always provides for his children."

I continue to ponder her words. Is her husband a responsible landlord? Or does he own some of the run-down houses on my block? Is this family's income an answer to prayer, or is it the plunder of the poor? (Isaiah 3:14)

The questions come home: But the questions are not just for "wealthy people out there" because I, too, am a landlord.

When Carolyn and I adopted Caleb, we moved out of the house we owned to a house down the block with a backyard. While Carolyn wanted to sell the house we had lived in, I insisted we keep it—even though being a landlord complicates my too-busy life, sets me apart from my neighbors and causes discord in my family.

I tell myself I want to "keep that corner of the block clean," have money for Caleb's college, and give us financial security when we get old. Those are legitimate impulses. But I must acknowledge I keep that house largely because of my desire to become richer than I am.

We get rich without trying! The problem runs deeper than my overt desire to get rich. My place in the global economic system enriches me at the expense of others, even when I'm only trying to get life's necessities.

Many of my favorite recipes from the cookbook *Extending the Table* use pineapple. Sometimes we put bananas on our cereal. Caleb loves dried mango chips. These foods are cheap and abundant, even though they come from thousands of miles away.

Actually they are cheap *because* they come from thousands of miles away. The sugar I used to can peaches this year may have been grown by the woman I met in the Philippines. I thank God Caleb will have food this winter. But are my cheap peaches a "blessing from God" when the woman who raised the sugar I used to preserve them doesn't earn enough to buy decent suppers for her children?

Last year our family paid a bit more than 5 percent of our income for food. Because our food was so cheap, we had more money to go on vacation and add to our savings account.

We also had more money to give to our church. But did God take food out of Filipino children's mouths so we would have more money for church? I don't think so.

The main reason I am wealthy is not that God has blessed me but that I live and work in a wealthy country. The wages Carolyn and I receive place our family in the global upper class. Our wages are high largely because wealth has flowed into this country from around the world for centuries. Goods we buy are cheap, in great part because people who make them receive less than an adequate wage, and the processes used to make them degrade God's earth.

What I will not do: I did not create the global economic system that sets the price of sugar and determines the wage I receive. So I will not feel guilty about that system.

But it is sinful that people who grow the food I eat do not earn enough to feed their own family. God does not will that these people go hungry. So I will not thank God for the money in my bank account that results from an unjust and sinful economic system.

Nor will I try to "live within my means," because the global economic system puts "too much" within my means.

What I will do: I do not know how to best respond to the fact that I live in a wealthy society. I do have some sense of the direction I want to head.

This Thanksgiving, I will be thankful for the freedoms I enjoy. I will thank God for my healthy body, family and friends and for the earth's bounty.

I will try to live with my fair share of the earth's resources. Jesus did promise that God will supply our material needs. I will thank God for the clothes I wear, the food I eat and the house in which I live. I believe God is pleased to take responsibility for supplying my material needs. But after I have enough, I'm on my own.

Living with my fair share means Carolyn and I could give much more than a 10 percent tithe to the church. I will ask God to remove my anxiety and greed that makes me hesitant to give away money I do not need, money that would not be in my pocket in a world that was more just.

I will also ask God for the strength to work for a just world. Making changes in the global economic system seems like an impossible task. But I can read about how global debt affects Christians in Third World countries. I can write letters to my legislators about national legislation that affects poor people in my country. I can buy coffee from an organization that ensures the people who grew it receive a fair wage, and vegetables from local organic farmers that protect and preserve God's earth.

Being content to live with enough in a society designed to provide me with too much is not easy. We need the help of family and friends, and the counsel and wisdom of the wider church. May the God who wants all people to live an abundant life give us grace to move thankfully to that good place of enough.

Dave Schrock-Shenk works as a global educator for Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa.

God's blessing is intended for all, not just me.

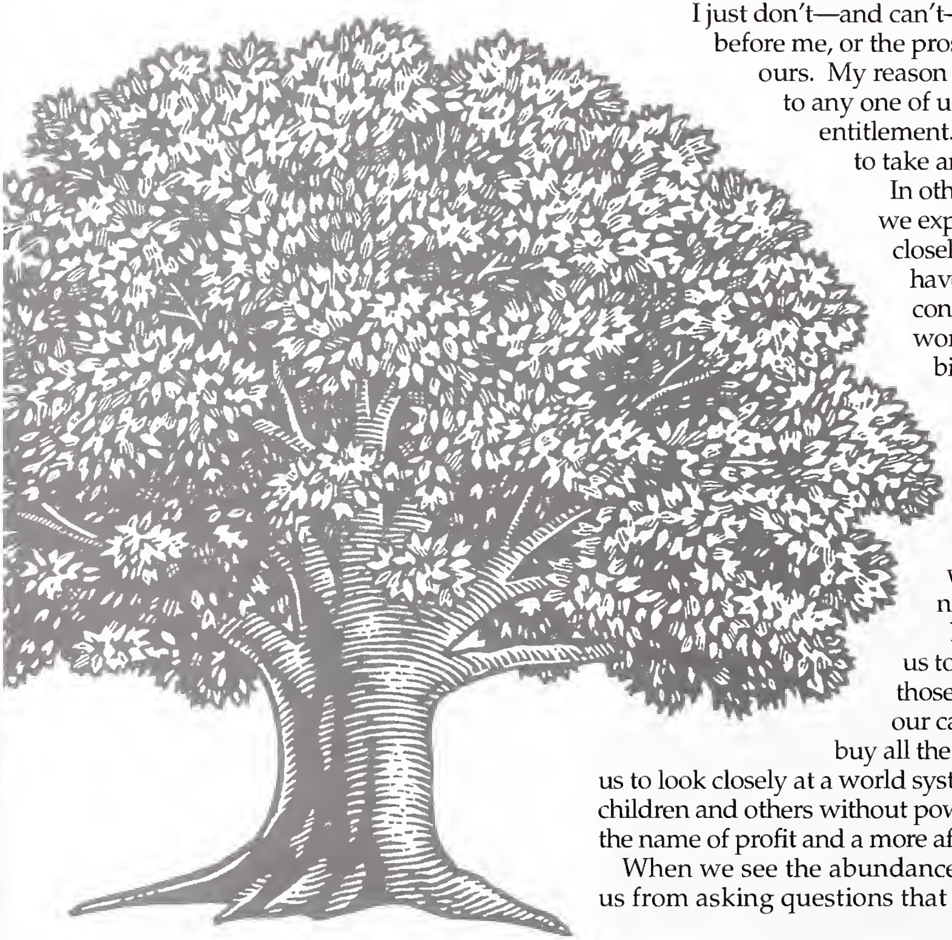
johnny appleseed got it wrong

David Radcliff

Sorry about spoiling that rollicking little table grace, but Johnny Appleseed got it wrong about the Lord's goodness to him. Let me be clear: I believe that God is the giver of all things good and noble. I believe God created humankind to be wonderfully inventive and resourceful. I believe God created the universe and all that dwells therein. I give God credit—and honor and praise—for all these remarkable gifts.

I just can't give God credit for the food on my table. ... Or the prosperity of our nation.

I just can't give God credit for the food on my table. Or the clothes on my back. Or the good year the company had. Or the prosperity of our nation. I freely offer God praise for food—and for the earth that brings it forth. And for the material world that offers shelter and safety for us otherwise fragile human beings. And for the ability of people to work together for the common good.



I just don't—and can't—give credit to God specifically for the food set before me, or the prosperity that has come to me and mine, or us and ours. My reason is simple: Once these are considered God's blessings to any one of us, or group of us, in particular, they become an entitlement. They become something we believe we have a right to take and enjoy because, after all, God has given them to us.

In other words, if we can give God credit for the abundance we experience, then we are under little obligation to look closely at how and why we have so much, when others have so little. For instance, we hear that folks like us have consumed as much in the past 50 years as the whole world had consumed up to that point in history. Yet a billion of our neighbors still exist on less than a dollar a day. How can we account for this? We don't really have to if we believe the prosperity we enjoy is attributable to God's blessing.

At best, when confronted with this glaring gap between "us" and "them," we may be moved to charity. We may be willing to share some of what we have with those who have so little. This is noble, and even biblical, as far as it goes.

But when was the last time feelings of charity moved us to make a real sacrifice on behalf of others, particularly those beyond our immediate community? To sell one of our cars or redirect a chunk of our investments or decline to buy all the house we could afford? Or when has charity caused us to look closely at a world system that rewards those who exploit the labor of children and others without power, or that wreaks havoc with the ecosystem—all in the name of profit and a more affluent lifestyle for a few of the world's people?

When we see the abundance some of us experience as God's blessing, it keeps us from asking questions that could change our lives and our world. Of course, this is in our "best interest." Many of us have benefited enormously from the way things are in our world. And we may not want to entertain the thought that rather than being an expression of God's blessing our prosperity may be part of a larger situation that God is actually working to change. The key is whether we accept the widely accepted belief—at least in more prosperous circles—that God is responsible for our abundance. If so, we can pray without a hint of ambivalence, "Thank you, Lord, for this food and for the bounty you have bestowed on us." The Bible, however, points us in a different direction.

Streams and forests: In creation, God brought a world into being that was rich and full. Into this world God placed humankind, represented in "adam," the Hebrew word for human. Adam was given opportunity to enjoy the bounty of God's created order. Created in God's image, these humans were also to exercise dominion over this world, utilizing it in a way fitting those who represent God here on earth. And this world, indeed, reflected God's blessing. Streams and forests, plants and animals, sun, moon and stars above. Assuredly, the human family would be blessed by the world into which God had placed it.

However, this arrangement proved inadequate. Given dominion, humanity soon sought power. The human family traveled only a few scriptural verses before rivalry and competition replaced peaceful coexistence as the primary mode of human behavior. The first murder turned on a dispute over who had received God's blessing.

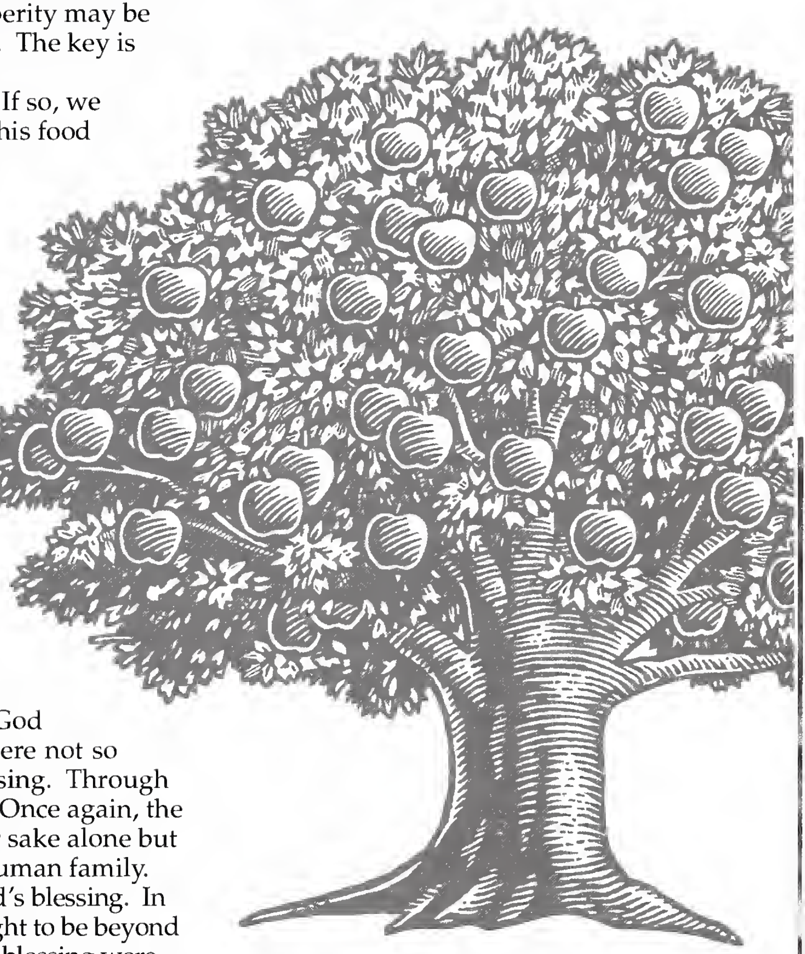
After several chapters of chaos, failures and fitful new starts, God again sought to bestow blessing. This time, the chosen ones were not so much blessed themselves as they were the bearers of God's blessing. Through Abram and Sarai, all the nations of the world are to be blessed. Once again, the blessing of God was not placed on one person or group for their sake alone but so that God's goodness would extend to the far reaches of the human family.

The coming of Christ Jesus is the definitive word concerning God's blessing. In Christ, God clearly sought to extend blessing to those people thought to be beyond its reach. Old categories of people excluded from the possibility of blessing were shattered. No longer were enemies any less deserving of the blessing of life than one's friends. Women and children could not be kept from the blessing of the Master's presence. Sinners and outcasts were as vulnerable to blessing—or perhaps more so—as the pious and pompous. And in the categorical redefinition of blessing that we call the Beatitudes, blessing is extended to the poor, the sorrowful, those thirsting for righteousness, the ones passionate for peace. The gate to blessing is swung open wide to invite in those not usually included.

Obstacle to blessing: Regarding material goods, these were much more likely to be seen by Jesus as an obstacle to blessing than as a sign of God's blessing. This is not to say that Jesus despised the material world. Jesus longed for the hungry to be fed, the naked clothed and the sick made well. What he didn't do was single out material well-being as a mark of God's special favor to particular people or groups. For those who did, and who relied on this as an excuse for their wanton accumulation, Jesus warned of the judgment to come. His disciples were confounded by this attitude: "Who, then, can be saved?" they asked. In other words, if material prosperity is not an indication of God's favor, then what is?

If there is any one thing that assured God's blessing in Jesus' mind, it was the commitment to understand God's blessing as intended for all. Beginning with his mother's declaration before his birth, Jesus' life and message heralded a true new world order. In this system, God's goodness is available to all, and particularly to those who have been traditionally—and systematically—denied it. Jesus' call to his followers was to live toward a world in which everyone had equal access to the bounty God had intended for all. Jesus railed against the greed, gluttony and sense of entitlement that gave some people unfettered access to the blessings of God, while others were kept "under the curse," somehow not as deserving of God's blessing as others.

Jesus knew what the prophets had sensed centuries before: When some people are seemingly excluded from receiving God's goodness, it is more likely



If there is any one thing that assured God's blessing in Jesus' mind, it was the commitment to understand God's blessing as intended for all.

the result of human manipulation than of divine decision. God's earth and its bounty, and the health and well-being that flow from it, are the rightful inheritance of all people. It is human beings that so order, or disorder, this bounty so that some are virtually excluded while others are magnificently endowed.

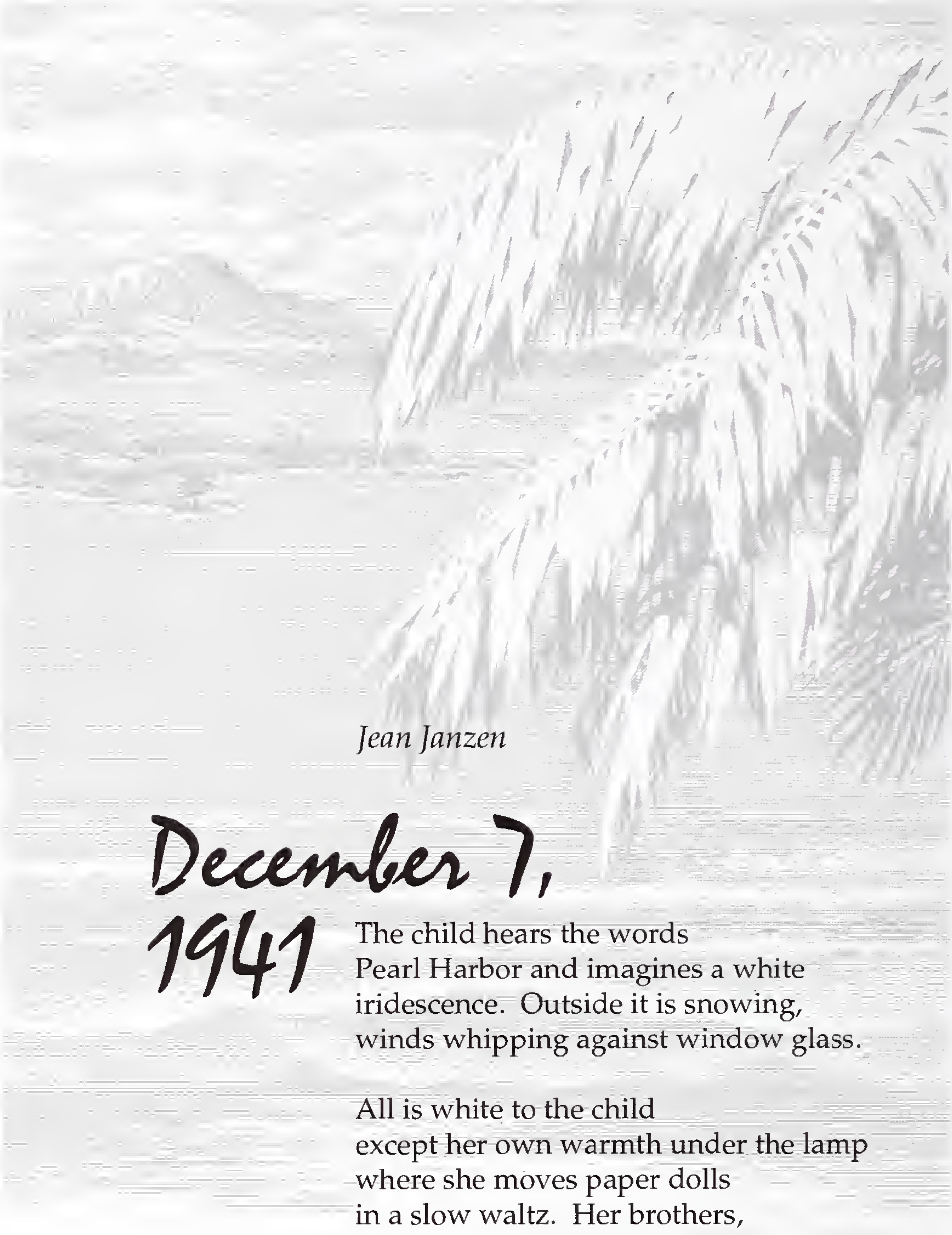
In our garage: What is called for here is not a denial of the biblical concept of blessing. Rather we must recover a more expansive understanding of blessing. The whole earth is God's blessing to all God's people. We can rightfully be thankful for this blessedness, though not because a large portion of it has ended up on our plate or in our garage. We are thankful for the way God has provided for our world, for the way we have been given the intelligence to use this blessing for the good of all, for the possibility of a redeemed life that can see our world through the eyes of Christ.

We thank God for creation and the sustenance it provides. But then we pray for the day when all God's people have access to this bounty, to ensure them a healthy and full life. In short, we then turn toward our world not out of charity but out of a longing for justice—a longing that moves us to question even the basis of our prosperity, a justice that gives each the opportunity to experience the blessing that was intended for all.

So long as we continue to understand blessing as a personal enrichment system validated by divine discretion, we will not need to ask the questions—or pray the prayers—that will lead to transformation of ourselves and our world. However, should we gain this larger vision of God's blessing for all, seeds will sprout and take root in our lives and our world that will bring forth blessing for all. Having prayed the prayer of justice, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we can pray the prayer of blessing, "Give us this day our daily bread." And some day it may be so.

Meanwhile, I'll be singing, "Oh, the Lord's been good to *us*, and so *we* thank the Lord, for giving *us* the things *we* need … " and thinking of God's bounty intended for God's children everywhere.

David Radcliff is director of Brethren Witness for the Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill. This article is reprinted with permission from Messenger, *November 1997.*



Jean Janzen

December 7, 1941

The child hears the words
Pearl Harbor and imagines a white
iridescence. Outside it is snowing,
winds whipping against window glass.

All is white to the child
except her own warmth under the lamp
where she moves paper dolls
in a slow waltz. Her brothers,

in the chill of the doorway talk
of bombs and fire. But she
sees pearls held in a huge bowl
where ships glide in and anchor,

a plenitude from which she pulls
a string to wrap around the slim
necks of the dancers.
The voices continue—the roar

of planes, the floating dead.
She lifts her hand up to the lamp,
its red rivers and its pulse,
then layers the smiling dolls
into the box, and closes the lid.

Jean Janzen lives in Fresno, Calif.

Letters

LISTEN WHILE DRIVING

I continue to appreciate *The Mennonite* on audiocassette, as I listen while I drive my 125-mile trips. Thanks to Martha Graber. *Rose M. Diller, Orrville, Ohio*

Editor's note: *Martha Graber's faithful, volunteer work allows us to offer* The Mennonite *on cassette at the low price of $35 per year. We plan to offer the new magazine on cassette as well, but the price will increase. If interested you may wish to subscribe soon. Write to* The Mennonite, *P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

BITTER IRONY

We appreciate the attention *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald* paid to Mennonite literature in their Oct. 14 issues. Particularly delightful were the editorials celebrating biblical and contemporary poets who write about human desire and "sensuous spirituality."

We are among those poets ourselves, so we were saddened to learn that Oct. 14 was also the date that Franconia Conference announced the decision to break fellowship with Germantown Mennonite Church. Further, it seems a bitter irony that this censure should be served against America's oldest Mennonite congregation, which, with its Quaker neighbors, has the distinction of having made one of the first denunciations of slavery.

We are sorry that the Mennonite Church cannot again risk protecting the dignity and desire of all people. *Jeff Gundy, Bluffton, Ohio; Julia Kasdorf, Camp Hill, Pa.; Jean Janzen, Fresno, Calif.*

STOCKS ARE FOR THE WEALTHY

J.B. Miller's column on the stock market (Aug. 26 issue, page 12) distressed me, as his columns on "fiscal health" often do. Despite the illusion so successfully perpetuated by the economic apparatus of the stock market, wealth is not generated out of thin air. Wealth is only generated from the labor of women and men or from the resources of the earth. When extraordinary profits are being realized, as in the current stock market expansion, it means that both labor and resources are being exploited in ways that are neither just nor sustainable. Of course, large corporations are the primary beneficiaries of that exploitation, but stock investors are also beneficiaries. Why assume that Christians can legitimately be encouraged to participate in such an exploitative, unjust and unsustainable system of economic activity?

Miller's column also seems destructive of Christian community, since it is addressed only to that portion of the church community that has stock investments or enough money in savings to make stock investments. Perhaps a larger number of Mennonites per capita have that capability than within the general population. But within the communities where I have lived, there are a great many people who can only dream of the luxury of having enough money in savings to invest in stocks, and whose savings, if they are able to have some, are most often quickly eaten up by the pressing needs of making ends meet in the most recent life emergency to arise. I wonder if Miller has given thought to how his column is viewed by such people? While there have been a few columns in this space that address the fiscal health of poor or lower-income people, the advice is usually given to those who already have plenty.

Though I have neither the resources nor the inclination to invest in stocks, I do have a retirement plan as a pastor. The healthy profits generated in that fund come in part from stock investments, all carefully screened to protect the purity of my Christian convictions. So I know I am a participant in this economic system I am challenging. If it were simply a matter of all of us investing together for the greater good of all, it would be OK. Yet the benefits are not equally spread. My retirement income is generated by those who have no such security or from resources of the earth that will no longer be there to support my grandchildren. Have we heard of living in a world of enough? *S. Roy Kaufman, Laird, Sask.*

ABORTION IS VIOLENT

According to the Oct. 14 issue (page 15), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is sponsoring a conference called "Envisioning a World Without Violence: Organizing the Religious Community Against the Death Penalty."

The AFSC supports abortion; therefore., it has no vision of a world without violence. Mother Teresa called abortion the greatest threat to peace in the world today, while Gandhi once said, "It seems to me as clear as daylight that abortion would be a crime." The Mennonite Confession of Faith says abortion, along with war and capital punishment, is an act of violence that is against the will of God.

Since AFSC supports the killing of unborn children, I consider it a bad organization that should not be supported by genuine Christians or pacifists who believe that all human life is sacred. *Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

WHERE TO ORDER BOOKS

I appreciate your book reviews, but how does one find these books, e.g., *When God Says No* by Leith Anderson (Bethany House, 1996), which was reviewed in the Sept. 23 issue? Thanks for your help in this regard. *Eileen Wiebe via e-mail*

Editor's note: *If you are interested in a book reviewed in* The Mennonite, *you can call Faith & Life Bookstore, 1-800-743-2484, and someone will be happy to order it for you.*

MISLEADING INFORMATION

A newsclip you printed on Burma, or Myanmar, as that country is known today, may have contained some misleading information. (See July 22 issue, page 21.)

First, the government of Myanmar has no agreement between it and any number of ethnic minorities to grow opium for the drug trade. This would be a self-destructing measure were it remotely true. But the drug trade is thriving, according to Bertil Lintner, a recognized authority. He claims that there are 10 "factories" that produce heroin, up from three only 10 years ago. His claim is that the government purchases weapons from China from the sale of drugs. This is denied by the government. The United Nations does have a drug eradication program in place.

continued on next page

Second, the news clip indicates that most of the Karen, an ethnic minority, are Christian and have been fighting for independence for 40 years. The Karen make up 10 to 11 percent of Burma's (Myanmar's) population of 45 million. In fact, less than 10 percent (perhaps 300,000 to 350,000) are Christian, mostly Baptists. A million are Buddhists while the majority remains animist.

Most of the 4.5 million Karen are not fighting a war of resistance to gain an autonomous status. A small minority numbering far less than 5 percent are involved. Their government, known as the Kowtholei, has been fighting for independence or autonomy since 1947. The resistance army has been largely decimated, as superior government troops have destroyed most positions at the Myanmar-Thailand border.

About 75,000 Karen have crossed into Thailand to escape harsh treatment inflicted by the government of Myanmar. They are being cared for by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), mostly with funds from Europe. Victor Neumann, a Mennonite from British Columbia, has worked eight years in the refugee camps, delivering rice and other staples to a dozen locations. Victor worked in the Vietnamese "boat" camps in Thailand for Mennonite Central Committee from 1980 to 1985. He himself was a refugee in Europe after World War II. Another Mennonite, Max Ediger (Turpin, Okla.), is involved in a documentation project that closely follows events in Myanmar. He works with MCC in Bangkok, Thailand. A credible monthly newsletter, *Burma Issues*, is available from MCC.

The tragedy of Myanmar is that a totalitarian regime refused to accept the democratic elections of May 1990, in which Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi won a resounding victory. She remains under house arrest to this day. Meanwhile, many suffer. *Jake Buhler, Hanoi, Vietnam*

ANOTHER SOURCE FOR BOOKS

In addition to Heaven Bookstore, which I mentioned in my article "Interpreters of Life and Truth" (Oct. 14 issue, page 10), another good source for literature written by Canadian Mennonites is the mail-order house "Mennonite Books and ... More" in Winnipeg (1-800-465-6564). I look forward to the time when Mennonite bookstores in the United States keep an up-to-date stock of books by both U.S. and Canadian Mennonite poets, fiction writers and dramatists. *Ervin Beck, Goshen, Ind.*

I read the article "Interpreters of Life and Truth" by Ervin Beck (Oct. 14 issue, page 10) and would like to make you aware of our book business which caters to Mennonites.

In Beck's article, reference is made to Tim Brandt and his store "Heaven." (By the way, Tim is my nephew, and a good book person.) However, I must differ with you about his store being the best place to obtain Mennonite writings. "Mennonite Books and ... More" is a mail-order house that specializes in all types of Mennonite writings. We have been mailing out products for over 10 years, sending items to many places in the United States and around the world, besides our usual Canadian addresses. In order to serve American customers more adequately, we have a U.S. address to which Americans can send orders. We have found that this, plus our toll-free phone line, has enhanced our U.S. business and pleased customers. Our address is Box 13544, Grand Forks, ND 58208-3544; 1-800-465-6564; mennonitebooks@brandtfamily.com; and our home page site is http://www.infobahn.mb.ca/brandtfamily. *Gilbert G. Brandt, Mennonite Books and ... More, Winnipeg*

INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

The report that the Franconia Conference has ousted the Germantown Mennonite Church (see Oct. 28 issue, page 13) is disheartening.

Some letters in Mennonite periodicals reflect a lack of accurate information [about homosexuality]. There is much medical information available to us. (*Textbook of Homosexuality and Mental Health*, APA Press, 1996, 977 pages, is one such book.) Homosexuality probably has multiple roots, but it is not a "chosen lifestyle." To ignore the medical and other pertinent information available to us seems irresponsible to me. We encourage Mennonites to accept diversity, but not in this area.

One letter says that the Anabaptist concept is being faithful to Jesus. Perhaps then we should practice love, compassion and acceptance. Jesus seems to have related more to those who were not seen as acceptable in his day than those who judged. We accept differences in biblical interpretation in other areas or ignore parts of the injunctions given in Leviticus 18 and 19 (and Romans 1) but lift up the brief statement on "homosexual behavior" and oust a congregation.

I know of only one congregation in Pennsylvania that diligently studied the topic and had dialogue with a variety of individuals in preparation for the vote on Germantown. Was this true of other churches in that conference? For that matter, how many congregations have followed the recommendation that was accepted at Saskatoon and Purdue asking us to study and have dialogue?

Fortunately, the Germantown congregation and our gay and lesbian fellow Christians do not need the acceptance of the Franconia Conference to be accepted by God. However, it is important for those of us who differ from those who would expel the gay or lesbian individual from our congregation to speak up and reach out.

Our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters must be weary of this ongoing debate. There is so much more that the church should be involved in doing. *Elsie Steelberg, Wichita, Kan.*

DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING

How lovely to read of the vital ministry and outreach of the Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia and of the Tenth Man grant to help them remodel its building (Mennonite Men insert in Oct. 28 issue) before turning the pages of the Oct. 28 issue (page 13) to read of [the congregation's] expulsion from the Franconia Conference. With these vastly different ways of looking at vibrant parts of the body of Christ, one can only wonder how these two groups (the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church) intend to merge. I revel in the humble pie to be eaten by conferences and conference councils welcoming back the exiles in their midst after integration. *Frank Trnka, Minneapolis, Minn.*

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Editor's note: *All letters are welcome. They must be signed, but names of writers may be withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and brevity.*

Speaking out

The best way to bring people to Christ

Why I didn't join the Graham Crusade campaign invitation in Wichita, Kan.

Don Steelberg

At the beginning of the year I was invited to join a committee formed by several evangelical church leaders to bring a Franklin Graham Crusade to Wichita, Kan. I declined.

I was impressed with the organization of the crusade. The expenditure of $10 per attendee is not excessive, making the cost about $400,000, with much of that raised by private subscription so that the offerings at the crusade are not the focus. Graham receives no remuneration beyond what is charged by the organization. No love offerings. There are programs for youth, evangelism training and an outreach social justice program.

My problem with this is, How do people best come to Christ? Through the local congregation. People come to Christ in one-to-one witnessing and through crusades. But the best way is through the congregation.

Congregations as institutions are often held in disrespect, sometimes justly. But it is the local body of Christ, without which, according to the New Testament, you cannot consider yourself a Christian. There is no solo Christian experience.

The crusade recognizes this by training and assigning counselors who try to match converts to congregations that are to follow them up. But that is too late. The crusade tries hard, but it ends up endorsing the individualism of our age rather than counteracting it.

If I had been invited by Wichita's evangelical leadership to talk about bringing Wichita to Christ, what would I have suggested? That the most important thing today is for our congregations to show how their life together makes a difference.

One way to do this is for each congregation to engage in a study process of one of the hard sayings of the Bible, and seek how to best live it out.

The hard Bible teaching I would have suggested is this: "Who may enter God's tent? Those who do not lend money at interest" (Psalm 15:6).

What makes interest wrong? The rabbis said it is all right to rent out a field you own but are not using. By the same token you can charge to lend one of your donkeys—we would say cars today—to someone to go to work. The argument seems to have been that if I lend you money and nothing new is produced, I ought not charge interest. Money was a medium of exchange, not productive in itself.

Locked in a box: When the church came to a different understanding of money, it overturned that argument and took up the emphasis of not being usurious. Calvin said that money locked in a box was sterile, but who borrows to lock the money up again? You borrow to put it to work, making it as fruitful as a field or a donkey.

The crusade ends up endorsing the individualism of our age rather than counteracting it.

The church has done this with another hard Scripture, "Do not divorce," and is now looking at the issue of homosexuality in the same way. The church has believed it could moderate Scripture as the Holy Spirit led it into new understandings of truth.

Calvin said to operate by the biblical principle of the Golden Rule. Generosity and regard for the poor are biblical commands, and interest is sinful if it hurts the neighbor.

What the church attempted to do was (1) take the Bible seriously, (2) change its understanding in the light of new facts (that money can be productive on its own) and (3) see that changing its understanding did not mean that interest taking was morally good but that the context has to be widened to take into account circumstances and their effects.

Suppose congregations in Wichita studied this text and this argument. Suppose they found in their Bible study of Exodus and Deuteronomy that in the second writing of the law scholars changed the original prohibition to allow usury when the borrower was outside the household of faith. Suppose that congregations heard this saying of Jesus: "If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:34-36).

How do you feel about not charging interest on your loans? Jesus goes to the root of things, to their original intention. Would it help to talk about it and join one another in living it out?

Caroline Byss writes, "When a person internalizes money as a symbol of power, its acquisition and control become symbolic of that person's health: When she acquires money, her biological system receives the signal that power is coming into her body. Her mind transmits the unconscious message, 'I have money. Therefore, I'm safe, I'm secure, I have power and all is well'" (*Anatomy of the Spirit*, Harmony Books, 1996).

Is this why Jesus speaks so often about money? Lending and expecting nothing in return may be a way of getting free of money's hold and its false security, dethroning its place as an idol in our lives.

What would happen if we engaged in that kind of painful Bible study? Suppose that after this corporate Bible study all the congregations involved decided they would set up loans to lend without interest, not just to the household of faith but to anyone, as Jesus said. What do you think that would say to unbelieving Wichitans?

They would need to hear about it. But when there's money available,

continued on next page

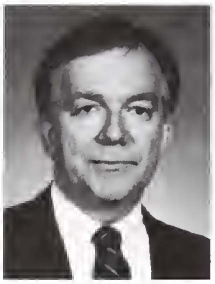
"Speaking out" and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite*.

Fiscal health

Lessons gleaned from writing this column

Seven observations on stewardship and money matters

J.B. Miller



J. B. Miller is financial service product manager for AMA Solutions, Inc., in Chicago.

This is one of my last columns for *The Mennonite.* After more than three years of writing a column, and with a geographic move, it seems like the time to move on to other things. I've enjoyed the opportunity to write about financial and stewardship matters. It challenged me to find topics that would educate and sometimes stimulate thinking about money matters.

When I first began writing the column I was working for Mennonite Mutual Aid. Working there provided me with a wonderful window to see how people experience stewardship and money management. Over the last several months I have reflected on some of the things I've learned about stewardship and money during the past seven years. The observations are anecdotal and not scientific.

Some observations:

1 Wealthy Mennonites are not necessarily greedy and materialistic, just as poor Mennonites are not necessarily generous and charitable. Generosity and greed are found within both groups. Some of the most generous people I've met in the past seven years are considered wealthy by any standards. They have learned to live and give sacrificially in spite of their wealth. The same can be said for poor people. So stereotyping groups and suggesting that they behave in a particular way is unfair and generally untrue.

> ***Generous and charitable parents raise generous and charitable children. Parents who model good stewardship habits pass those values on to their children.***

2 More and more, congregations are developing around similar economic groups. Poor Mennonites tend to gravitate toward the same congregations, just as wealthy Mennonites tend to group together. While there are many exceptions to this, virtually every large Mennonite community has one or two congregations where these groups feel most comfortable.

3 How Mennonites handle wealth is generational. Older Mennonites are generally uncomfortable with the thought of being wealthy, and in fact often deny it. Baby boomers, those in their late 30s to early 50s, are more comfortable with it but still not sure how to deal with it. The younger wealthy are learning how to integrate it better. They've recognized earlier that with wealth comes responsibility.

4 Mennonite pastors often have a poor understanding of economics. As a result, both the rich and the poor feel misunderstood by pastoral leaders. The wealthy are misunderstood for being too successful, thereby raising suspicions as to how they became wealthy. The poor raise suspicion around issues of initiative and money management.

5 Generous and charitable parents raise generous and charitable children. Parents who model good stewardship habits pass those values on to their children. These children will become the future financial supporters of our Mennonite congregations and institutions in the 21st century.

6 Giving patterns, or nongiving patterns, are difficult to change. People who have not been generous with their resources throughout their life seldom become generous in their old age. Giving and generosity are attitudes that people bring to all of life. People who do not support our Mennonite organizations throughout their lifetime seldom remember these organizations in their wills. Instead, they leave their estates to family members, regardless of need.

7 Stewardship issues tend to be similar across national boundaries; financial issues are not. Canadian and U.S. Mennonites are equally interested, or disinterested, in issues of stewardship. So writing a column about stewardship can meet both groups' needs. However, writing about financial matters is much more difficult, since investment, insurance, estate and tax regulations vary significantly across borders.

Writing a column for *The Mennonite* has been a great opportunity. I've appreciated words of counsel and affirmation that people have given me from time to time. I hope I have challenged you occasionally to think about your giving and your approach to stewardship.

SPEAKING OUT *continued*

word travels fast. That's how evangelism has been defined: one member of the human race telling another where to find bread.

It won't necessarily save souls. Five thousand were fed bread by Jesus, and they got him wrong, wanted to make him a king. Jesus had foreseen this when he refused the tempter's offer to turn stones into bread. I'm not proposing some gimmick in order to bring people in.

Still, sharing our lives with others in the church is better than going on a crusade. The next time someone asks you how to be saved, tell them, The Bible says, Do not lend money at interest.

Don Steelberg is pastor at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kan.

News

Writers mark flowering of U.S. Menno literature

Goshen, Ind.—Mennonite writing in the United States is gaining the vigor that characterizes the Mennonite literary scene north of the 49th parallel, if a recent writers' conference here is any indication. U.S. writers of Mennonite background are receiving the national attention that Canadian writers have enjoyed for years.

"A watershed" and "a turning point" were some of the ways that speakers described the "Mennonite/s Writing in the U.S." conference held at Goshen College Oct. 23-26. Almost 300 people gathered to listen to Mennonite poets and fiction-writers read their work, to hear critical papers on these writings and to discuss teaching and publishing Mennonite literature. The event was modeled after a "Mennonite/s Writing in Canada" conference held in Waterloo, Ont., in 1990.

> ***"[Mennonite] writing [in the U.S.] has reached a critical mass."***
>
> ***Jeff Gundy***

Many conversations during the weekend centered on how writers from Mennonite communities weigh the "tension between the claims of the collective and the claims of art," as poet Denise Levertov defined it. Levertov, one of the 10 most-anthologized poets in the United States, gave Goshen's annual S.A. Yoder Lecture at the beginning of the conference on "The Migrant Muse." How much writers censor themselves because of the constraints of a religious group, she said, "comes down to how strong a sense of artistic vocation one has."

The idea undergirding many of the weekend's presentations—that writers speak from the margins of a monolithic "Mennonite community"—came under fire in a paper by Hildi Froese-Tiessen from Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont. Apart from her paper, however, most conference presentations explored or acknowledged the uneasiness many Mennonites feel with writers who, said poet Jeff Gundy, come back from other worlds like children from the creek with "things that their parents aren't sure should be in the house."

The conference featured poetry from Gundy, Bluffton, Ohio; Julia Kasdorf, Camp Hill, Pa.; Jean Janzen, Fresno, Calif.; Leonard Neufeldt, West Lafayette, Ind.; Keith Ratzlaff, Pella, Iowa, and Raylene Hinz Penner, Newton, Kan., as well as fiction by Janet Kauffman, Hudson, Mich., and Dallas Wiebe, Cincinnati, and drama by Helen Stoltzfus, Oakland, Calif.

Almost 30 academic papers on the works of Mennonite writers were presented during the weekend. Ervin Beck, head of Goshen's English department and one of the conference organizers, said these papers represented the most significant element of the conference because they mark "the beginning of serious literary criticism of literature written by U.S. Mennonites."

After a banquet on Saturday evening, three leading Mennonite writers—who pioneered in the field "before it was a fashionable thing to talk about," said Beck—were recognized for their contributions to Mennonite literature. Writers Warren Kliewer, Secaucus, N.J., Elmer Suderman, St. Peter, Minn., and John Ruth, Harleysville, Pa., each received tributes.

Renowned Canadian novelist Rudy Wiebe, Edmonton, Alta., said that he was encouraged by the literary quality and energy he witnessed during the weekend. "The point is—don't stop," he urged writers at the after-dinner program on Saturday night. "Writing … cannot just be exuded like sap from a tree. … To make the extraordinary, you have to take a lifetime."

Gundy said that the weekend gave him "a sense that [Mennonite] writing [in the U.S.] has reached a critical mass. We're beyond the stage where one or two of us get together and say, 'Wouldn't it be great if we had something like the Canadians?'"

Novelist Dallas Wiebe agreed. "This is a tremendous moment in the history of Mennonite writing [in the U.S.]—and I'm not one to exaggerate." *Valerie Weaver*

Inside the news

Churches keeping more money at home / p. 14

Staffer fears for future of Native Concerns / p. 16

Young teachers get taste of bitter conflict / p. 16

Pastors juggle work and fatherhood / p. 18

In late April and May, Mennonite Central Committee contributed $30,000 U.S. for bean and onion seeds, hoes, machetes and powdered milk for malnourished children in six camps in northern Uganda. While most of Uganda is at peace for the first time in many years, people in northern Uganda have suffered at the hands of the "Lord's Resistance Army."

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"The Ties that Bind: Building Healthy Leader-Congregational Relations" is the theme for the annual School for Leadership Training to be held Jan. 19-22, 1998, at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Speakers include David Augsburger, Sue Clemmer Steiner, Leslie Francisco and John L. Ruth. For information call EMS at (540) 432-4260; e-mail Kounss@emu.edu.

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"Youth and Family Ministry into the 21st Century," a conference on how congregations can help develop and support strong families, will be held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 16-17, 1998. Roland D. Martinson, professor of pastoral care and counseling at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., is the featured presenter. For more information, contact the AMBS continuing education office, (219) 296-6207 or bsawatzky@ambs.edu.

"Glad to Have a Friend Like You" was the theme for the Crossroads Community Center, Philadelphia, summer reading program. A highlight for the children in the program was the "day in the country" with families from East Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa. One child wrote, "I wish I can go with you every year and stay until I am 50 years old."

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The number of students attending Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., has increased for the fifth year in a row. This fall 211 enrolled for classes, an 8 percent increase from a year ago. Twenty-nine students are taking classes through the Conference Based Theological Education programs in Iowa, Kansas, Ontario and Ohio. The AMBS student body includes 27 United Methodist students.

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The board of Mennonite Women, meeting for the first time Oct. 16-18, rose to their feet and gave a spontaneous twirl as they voted to call their new magazine *Timbrel*. The first issue of the bimonthly publication, which replaces *WMSC Voice* and *Window to Mission*, will be released in mid-January 1998. Copies of the first two issues of the magazine will be sent free to every General Conference and Mennonite Church congregation. After that, the magazine will move to a subscription base.

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A "Campaign for Secure Dwellings" calls on North American churches to take action to stop the demolition of Palestinian homes. The initiative, sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams, is in light of intensified house demolitions in the West Bank by the government of Israel. Currently at least 1,000 to 1,500 homes are scheduled for destruction in the West Bank. For more information, contact Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 455-1199, or e-mail cpt@igc.org.

A leaning toward service

LA INTEGRACION EDUCATIVA
UN DERECHO
DE
Todos y Todas
1997
Coca-Cola

Linda Shelly

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Heidi Friesen, right, of Altona, Man., serves as a teacher's assistant in 6 de Mayo, Honduras, as part of Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program. Here, she helps teacher Lavinia de Ochoa teach "left and right" to children with developmental delays.

SALT is only one of MCC's programs aimed at young adults. In the Intermenno Trainee Program, North Americans ages 19 to 27 go to the Netherlands, Germany or Switzerland for one year. In Youth Discovery Teams, North Americans and internationals, age 18 to 24, form a team with a specific theme or activity. YDT experiences range from two months to one year. A Latino music YDT will travel in Mexico and Honduras for eight weeks during July and August 1998. A soccer YDT is being planned for summer 1999. North American and West African men will form a traveling team to play exhibition games in the United States, Canada and West Africa.

Information about any of these programs is available in the Akron, Pa., Winnipeg and local MCC offices. *David Franklin*

Churches keeping more money at home

In Vancouver, blame it on the high cost of living. First United Mennonite Church, located in one of Canada's most expensive cities, has seen its membership drop by half in the last 10 years. The reason, according to pastor Helmut Isaak, is people fleeing to outlying communities where it is cheaper to live.

"At the same time, we have tried to maintain the staff level and building," Isaak says. "If you discontinue that, more people will leave the church."

The result is that the congregation in 1995 spent nearly 78 percent of its money for use locally, including 76 percent for expenses such as staff salaries and benefits. Ten years ago, First United kept barely half.

Meanwhile, down the Pacific Coast, First Mennonite Church of Reedley, Calif., also spent 78 percent of its money at home in 1995. About 17 percent of expenditures went for local relief and mission, much of it to support an emerging Hispanic congregation in the city.

"That was money that [could] have gone to Pacific Southwest [Mennonite Conference] for church planting or to [General Conference Mennonite Church headquarters in] Newton [Kan.] for church planting, but we keep it here," says First Church pastor Ken Seitz.

The giving patterns at the congregations in Vancouver and Reedley are part of a trend called "localism." For a variety of reasons, congregations across the United States and Canada are keeping more of their money at home instead of sending it to area conference or denominational coffers.

Localism is not a recent development. In 1967, General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) congregations kept nearly 55 percent of their money at home. That figure jumped to 71 percent in 1995. That nearly mirrors the Mennonite Church (MC), where local spending went from 57 percent of expenditures to 75 percent.

More money staying at home obviously means less money going to conferencewide activities.

Almost all conference administrators point to increases in pastoral staffing in the past several decades as the reason for the change in giving patterns.

What's more, in the last 30 to 40 years, many conferences have experienced a shift from unpaid and bivocational pastors to full-time, salaried pastors. At the same time, those with full-time pastors have increased their salaries and benefits.

"It's part of the fact that the ministerial vocation continues to be professional," says GC treasurer Ted Stuckey.

The increase in localism signifies for many a fundamental shift in the church's work. "Our mission is not in Africa or India," says Isaak. "It's here."

> ***"It's fine to become active locally; that's the good part. On the other hand, if that blots out … Africa, India, Russia, it's parochial. Then it's not a good thing."***
>
> **Bill Block**

Which begs the question of whether this degree of local emphasis is good or bad. Many say it is a matter of balance.

"It's fine to become active locally; that's the good part," says Bill Block, who retired in July after 12 years with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada's Leadership Commission. "On the other hand, if that blots out … Africa, India, Russia, it's parochial. Then it's not a good thing."

Increased spending on congregational staff can benefit the pastor and the congregation. After 13 years as a bivocational pastor, John Landis in 1990 became the first full-time, salaried pastor at Gingrich Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Pa.

"It has given me time to work at development, to try and put handles on the vision for the congregation, to help the congregation grow," he says.

By growing in size and focusing on stewardship issues as a result, Landis says, Gingrich is better able to support the wider church. In fact, he says, the congregation's mission support has remained about the same despite the addition of a full-time pastor's salary and benefits.

"My philosophy has been you need a strong home-base congregation to have a strong outreach program," he says.

But some people doubt that localism is producing significant efforts to reach beyond the congregation. "We are fooling ourselves if we think it's for local outward ministry. It's for inward ministry," says Mark Vincent, director of the Giving Project, an MC/GC program to promote stewardship.

There needs to be a push and pull between meeting inward and outward needs, Vincent says, and right now the balance leans too far on the inward side. While some may claim that more staff means more people to do outreach, he says that is not reflected in where the dollars are going.

Not all congregations have followed the localism trend. The amount of money Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D., kept at home increased less than 2 percent in the last 35 years. In 1995, Salem kept less than a third of its money at home, well below the conference average.

"Can we justify spending more on ourselves as opposed to sending the money to Newton or [Mennonite Central Committee], where the need is greater than the need in our local community?" says deacon DeLayne Graber.

At the same time, Salem's giving for local relief and mission has remained at less than 2 percent of total spending, also well below conference averages. "[I'm] not saying that there aren't people who should be reached, but this county is pretty well churched," Graber says. *Rich Preheim, associate editor of* Mennonite Weekly Review, *for Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group*

The Fairview (Okla.) Mennonite Brethren Church celebrated its centennial by building a replica of its first worship center—a sod building. A crew of 70 volunteers worked for two months on the building. It took 17 slabs of four-inch thick sod per row for each side of the building. (*Christian Living*)

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Interracial marriage has an approval rating of 61 percent of whites, up from 25 percent in 1972, according to a Gallup poll. At the same time, reports the *Washington Spectator*, 58 percent of whites and 54 percent of blacks believe race relations will always be a problem, up from a 1963 Gallup poll showing 44 percent of whites and 26 percent of blacks. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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"Hot zones" of drug-resistant tuberculosis are showing up all over the world and threaten to touch off a global epidemic of virtually incurable TB. A survey done by the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease found multidrug-resistant TB in one-third of all 35 countries surveyed. Countries that had drug-resistant TB—between 2 and 14 percent of cases—included India, Russia, Latvia, Estonia, the Dominican Republic, Argentina and Ivory Coast. (*Reuters*)

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For more than a year the rains have failed or been shorter than normal in northern Tanzania. At the request of the Tanzanian Mennonite Church, Mennonite Central Committee has contributed $40,800 U.S. to buy 114 tons of corn for people in the Mara region. The food, purchased in Tanzania and distributed by Mennonites and Catholics, is a small amount compared to demand. Local churches have worked with villages to verify that the food reaches those in greatest need. Acute food shortage affects 60 percent of the Mara region.

The Mennonite Central Committee Relief Auction held in Morris, Man., Sept. 20 raised about $145,000 for MCC, up 32 percent from last year. The Mennonite Festival for World Relief, held Oct. 18 in Albany, Ore., raised $68,000 for MCC, about $5,000 more than last year. Sale attenders gathered more than 800 health kits to send to MCC. (*Canadian Mennonite* and *Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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A new study finds that rates of violence in urban neighborhoods are lower when there is a strong sense of community and values. The largest predictor of violent crime, says an article in *Science Journal*, is "collective efficacy," which is a sense of trust, common values and cohesion in neighborhoods. The most important element of collective efficacy is a willingness of residents to intervene in the lives of children, e.g., disciplining children for truancy and graffiti, and street-corner "hanging." The findings contradict popular thinking that crime is mainly caused by poverty, unemployment or racial discrimination. (*The Wichita Eagle*)

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Staff at the Roca Blanca Missions Base in the southwestern state of Oaxaca, Mexico, thank God for sparing their lives as they dig out from under the mud left behind when Hurricane Pauline pounded the country Oct. 8. Charles and Elizabeth Norton, Eastern Mennonite Missions workers there, say that no staff or students were injured, but damage to the beachfront property was extensive. Two trailers used to house the staff were completely washed away by water that swept over the three-foot retaining wall surrounding the base. Water and mud, up to five feet in some places, damaged the inside of the mission and institute buildings. The hurricane that hit Mexico left more than 140 people dead and many others without homes, food or pure drinking water. (*Carol L. Wert*)

Staffer fears for future of Native Concerns

Winnipeg (*Canadian Mennonite*)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada's plan to shift Native Concerns from a national program to "resourcing" the provinces is of deep concern to one longtime staff member.

Menno Wiebe, Native Concerns director, will leave at the end of the year, and in 1998 the two full-time Native Concerns positions will change to one half-time position.

In what Wiebe calls an "extremely un-Anabaptistlike" policy change—the shift to resourcing instead of program—church members are being "eliminated as participants" and staff people made "into underlings."

As a result, "the dissident voice has no place. I'm disappointed," Wiebe says. He wonders whether MCC is "trying to copy World Vision" and whether the church will be reduced to "a recipient audience we sell to" rather than being "doers, senders."

Wiebe fears provincializing the program will mean fewer Native programs and diminished attention to Native communities.

MCC Canada has had a "gently stubborn" influence in legal and constitutional issues such as Native land deals, he says, pointing out that five Manitoba bands have settled their treaty land entitlements in the last year, thanks at least in a small way to MCC involvement.

"Eliminating [this part] of the national office gets us out of the tough, politically oriented issues that need an ethical voice," says Wiebe. He predicts that "the provinces are so fiercely independent, they won't consult."

The reduction of the national office is "abominable—it's an abdication of the corporate voice," he says.

While increased budgeting for overseas projects is a good thing, Wiebe says, this has been at the expense of Native people in Canada.

"The Natives [who] know about it are quite angry. ... I've had some fairly strong reprisals."

The MCC Canada Native Concerns advisory committee met in September for the last time. Together with provincial staff, the committee discussed the changes to Native Concerns and the responsibilities of a new half-time portfolio.

Advisory committee member Karen Schlichting Enns, Winnipeg, says the group took a realistic look at what the provinces could do with federal Native issues.

"We had a list of about 30 items that the MCC Canada person could [potentially] do, which is realistically impossible with a half-time position," says Schlichting Enns. "We need to have somebody ... who will speak authoritatively on federal issues."

She says the hope is that this person will also act as a "prophetic voice for congregations."

Dale Taylor, MCC Canada associate director, says a continuing priority for Native Concerns will be justice issues, such as Native land claims. The half-time staff person will be a resource to provincial workers and will continue to "work at bridge building between Mennonites and Native people," says Taylor.

"Networking and communication" will be important, with the provinces taking more control of Native concerns, she says. The staff person will facilitate an annual meeting of provincial Native concerns workers and perhaps produce a newsletter.

The summer gardening program "could continue as a joint effort between MCC Canada and the provinces," says Taylor. "We will do some pieces as long as the province works at recruiting volunteers." *Marj Heinrichs*

Young teachers get taste of bitter conflict

Beirut (MCC)—Jackie Hogue of Winnipeg could see the Israeli artillery stations on the hills nearby as she walked to class each day in the frontline village of Kfar Roman, south Lebanon, where she taught this past summer.

"Every day there was some shelling," she says. "You get used to it, then you get tired of it."

Israeli forces have occupied Lebanese territory in the south since 1985. Israeli officials claim the occupation is necessary to protect settlements in northern Israel from resistance groups in Lebanon.

Hogue and three colleagues taught in three villages in the Nabatiyeh region of south Lebanon this summer as part of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) educational project.

The project had two main aims, says Joan Barkman, who directs MCC programs in Lebanon. "First, we wanted to offer solidarity and support to the people in southern Lebanon living along the zone occupied by Israel. These villages are still in daily threat of conflict. Many people have left.

"Those who remain either have no other options or have stubbornly refused to be intimidated. The price they pay is a life constantly dictated by the political tensions."

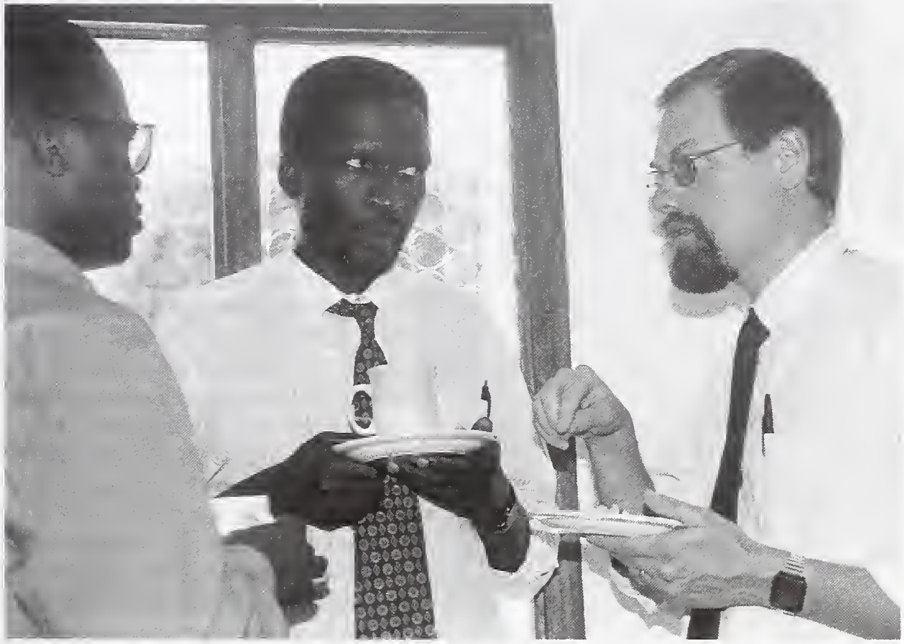
The second aim was to upgrade educational methods and improve chances of success for public school students. "During Lebanon's civil war, the educational system deteriorated immensely," says Barkman.

To help out, MCC organized a six-week supplementary project for July and August. In each village, MCC's partners were a local community organization and the school. "We focused on four subjects—math, science, French and English," Barkman says.

MCC hired local teachers for the first three subjects and brought in four young North Americans to teach English.

"For MCC, the primary importance of placing English teachers was their solidarity with the community. Few foreigners, or even Lebanese from other parts of the country, venture into this area [south Lebanon]. So to have foreigners coming to live with them was very significant," says Barkman.

A thirst for peace



Mbabane, Swaziland (MCC)—"Our squabbling over differences is like two of us deciding we are thirsty. We go to a shop together to quench our thirst. We receive our drinks only to discover that you have Coke in your cup and I have tea. We begin to argue that, since our drinks are different, we can't possibly sit together to quench our thirst."

Swazi church leader Nomsa Mndzebele used the preceding metaphor to describe divisions between Christians in this tiny country that has three different, sometimes disagreeing, church bodies. She spoke at a Sept. 27 consultation hosted by Mennonite Central Committee to share the Anabaptist perspective on peacemaking.

MCC works with all three of Swaziland's church groups, and all sent representatives to the meeting, including church leaders Muzie Masuku, left, and Rev. Mahlalela, pictured here with MCC Swaziland co-director Jon Rudy. The assembled group of 15 Swazis was asked, When have you seen reconciliation in your own life? What are significant barriers to peace in Swaziland? In discussion groups, participants enthusiastically discussed peacemaking in Swaziland and challenged the disunity they feel within the church. *Carolyn and Jon Rudy*

The Michiana Mennonite Relief Sale, Sept. 26-27 in Goshen, Ind., raised $570,603 for Mennonite Central Committee. The quilt auction brought in $162,855, and Coins for Relief raised $5,113. The Mennonite Country Auction, held Oct. 4 at Ritzville, Wash., raised $104,000. Six poppyseed rolls made by Lorene Stucky, Moundridge, Kan., sold for $1,220. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

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Thousands of internet users are visiting the first on-line game in the Christian music industry, reports EPNS. The game is based on a character, "Buzz," used to promote Fore-Front Records. In the game, Buzz flies around an alien planet, avoiding danger while collecting transmitter parts that will let him spread the gospel. The website is www.ForefrontRecords.com. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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The sixth grade girls' Sunday school class from Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb., took an overnight trip to North Newton, Kan., to work in Mennonite Central Committee Central States' resource center workroom. The class sorted and repackaged health kits, school kits and layette bundles, tied three comforters, toured Mennonite Press and Bethel College, and visited the Et Cetera Shop and Faith and Life Bookstore. (*The Northern Light*)

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Archaeologists in Israel have found a Roman governmental complex where they believe the apostle Paul was held in detention. The site is in the Mediterranean coastal village of Caesarea. The archaeologists found a mosaic with a Latin inscription suggesting a government agency for internal security; they believe Paul's hearings before the Roman governor took place there. In the Book of Acts, Paul was imprisoned from 58 to 60 CE, until he appealed to the Roman governor and was taken to Rome for trial. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

The House of Friendship, Hamilton, Ont., received a donation of about 12 tons of kidney beans for its emergency food program from John Froese, a local seed bean grower and teacher at the University of Waterloo (Ont.). Volunteers from House of Friendship's alcohol recovery home bagged some of the beans, which will be shared with other agencies. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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Many religious leaders in British Columbia have signed a statement protesting new legislation that allows same-sex couples to be considered legal spouses with regard to child custody, maintenance and access. The statement was signed by Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Protestant leaders, including Chris Arney, conference minister for the Conference of Mennonites in B.C. Arney felt that the statement was in keeping with the General Conference Mennonite Church's 1986 resolution on homosexuality. He signed the statement because it did not oppose others' rights but affirmed the traditional definition of marriage. (*Mennonite Reporter*)

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Ricardo Esquivia, lawyer and leader in the Colombian Mennonite church, represented conscientious objector Luis Gabriel Caldas Leon in court on Oct. 7. Caldas, a pacifist, refused to serve in the Colombian army. He was then charged with desertion and sentenced to seven months in prison. He served the prison term, only to be told upon his release that he had two weeks to report for induction or risk an additional prison term of up to seven years. The Colombian government insists that conscientious objection is not a protected human right and that there is no legal obligation to exempt conscientious objectors from military service requirements. (*Gospel Herald*)

Pastors juggle work and fatherhood

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Maternity leave is cropping up as an issue for Mennonites, but more fathers are becoming involved in the nurture of young children as well—so what about paternity leave?

If interviews with male pastors in Kansas, Virginia and California are any indication, pastors who are also fathers haven't given much thought to the idea of paternity leave. But they do believe guidelines for congregations would be helpful as family nurture becomes more of an issue for men.

"Frankly, it never even occurred to me to [ask for] paternity leave," says Rod Stafford, pastor at Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, Kan. Stafford's youngest child, now 3, was born while he was at a previous church. "I think I took a week's vacation," he says.

Getting to know you: *Matt Friesen, pastor at Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, holds his son, Nicholas, born earlier this fall. Both male and female pastors are paying more attention to time off for the birth of a child.*

Jim Brenneman, pastor at Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church, says paternity leave was not one of the things he thought about when he and his wife, Terri, adopted their son, Quinn, 13 months ago. "I think maybe part of the reason would have been because the congregation was so generous in helping us with the adoption," he says.

The flexible schedule inherent in a pastor's job and the willingness of congregations to adjust their expectations of pastors during "new baby time" are saving graces for fathers who are also pastors.

"I didn't get any paternity leave technically," says Ray Hurst, Harrisonburg, Va. He was co-pastor with his wife, Brenda Martin Hurst, at Tabor Mennonite Church in rural Newton, Kan., where one son was born and the other adopted.

But, he says, "the church was very flexible. They told me to take some time off—they were very affirmative of me readjusting my schedule and doing only the things that needed to get done for the time being. So it was never written into a contract, but it was certainly implied and supported by the congregation."

Says Hurst, who now pastors Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, "There was just a lot of trust on the congregation's part, that we do what was necessary for us and not take advantage of it."

Matt Friesen, pastor at Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan., became a first-time father recently when his son, Nicholas, was born. Friesen had planned in advance to take two weeks off and had arranged for guest speakers and other people to cover for him.

"What I have done since then," he says, "is to come in just in the mornings and work only on worship sorts of things and put a lot of the visitation and administrative things on hold for now."

His congregation has been supportive of his schedule adjustments, says Friesen. "I think it makes a big difference that our congregation is primarily young families, with lots of children. I think people have firsthand experience with working with newborns and knowing that that's an important time to take off."

Like the other pastors, Friesen said paternity leave was not something that automatically came to mind for him. "When I was growing up, my father didn't take off much time and it was never something we talked about. At least in my mind, paternity leave is just beginning to come up as an important thing to think about. I'm finding myself encouraging new fathers in our congregation to take that time."

Friesen says he thinks paternity leave guidelines from the General Conference would be helpful for con-

Record

MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
MMA—Mennonite Mutual Aid

MINISTERS

Paul Adams was installed as pastor at Niverville (Man.) Church Sept. 28.

Ed Balzer is pastor at Coaldale (Alta.) Church.

Lori Tiessen Banman is youth pastor at Charleswood Church, Winnipeg.

Ken Bechtel is interim pastor at First Church, Calgary.

Glenn Brubacher is pastor at Faith Church, Leamington, Ont.

Kelvin Dyck is pastor at Covenant Church, Winkler, Man.

Craig Friesen was installed as pastor at Rosthern (Sask.) Church Nov. 9.

Rudy Froese was installed as conference pastor for the Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan Nov. 9.

Doris Gascho will retire as conference minister for the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada effective June 30, 1998.

Kathy Giesbrecht is associate pastor at Springstein (Man.) Church.

Jessie and **Larry Kehler** are interim co-pastors at Altona (Man.) Church.

Bruce Keown is pastor at Nith Valley Church, New Hamburg, Ont.

Doreen and **Hugo Neufeld** will be co-pastors at Trinity Church, Calgary, beginning summer 1998.

Irvin Penner was installed as pastor at Graysville (Man.) Church Sept. 21.

Pam Peters-Pries is lay minister at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg.

Mary Schiedel, pastor at Hillcrest Church, New Hamburg, Ont., retired in August.

Doug Snyder was ordained Oct. 19 as part of the pastoral team at Erb Street Church, Waterloo, Ont.

Luc Tran was installed as pastor at Winnipeg Vietnamese Church in June.

Jim Whitehead is pastor at Cassel Church, Tavistock, Ont.

Candace and **Mark Wurtz** were installed as youth co-pastors at Rosthern (Sask.) Church Nov. 9.

WORKERS

Linda van Asselt-King received the 1997 Bethel Nursing Alumni Association Outstanding Young Alumna award Oct. 3 at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Regier

Mark Regier is socially responsible investing research and advocacy coordinator for MMA.

Sid A. Richard is corporate assistant vice president and chief actuary for MMA.

Tom Snowdon is peace ministries coordinator for MCC Canada.

Paternity leave *continued*

gregations. "I think for a lot of people the only thing they have to go on with their relationships with the pastor is what their own experiences have been. To have these things thought through and written down on paper would be good."

Rod Stafford agrees. "Pastoral ministry has been changing—I think congregations might be a little more receptive. It protects the pastor from having to suggest an idea that he will benefit from. It allows congregations to think ahead of time, too, about potential circumstances."

And the ideal paternity leave policy? "I think a couple of weeks would be terrific," Stafford says. "In a small church, more than a couple of weeks could become pretty burdensome."

The General Conference Mennonite Church as yet has no official maternity/paternity leave policy for pastors. However, John Esau, who directs the GC Ministerial Leadership office, has drafted guidelines for maternity and paternity leave that he plans to circulate widely for comment and hopes can be adopted by 1999. *Cynthia Snider*

Moving?
Let us know six weeks ahead.

John G. Bennett Jr., founder of the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy, was sentenced Sept. 22 to 12 years in federal prison for fraud and money-laundering. New Era was a giant Ponzi scheme, in which investments of new clients were used to pay old clients. Clients of New Era—including many church-related agencies —lost $100 million in the scheme; many early investors who benefited voluntarily returned their profits. Bennett accepted responsibility for his actions but claims he had been delusional and did not intend to commit fraud. (*ChristianWeek*)

• • •

Christian radio host Rich Agozino suggested in the show "Crosstalk" that homosexuality should be punishable by death. In his Aug. 29 show Agozino said, "Lesbian love [and] sodomy are viewed by God as being detestable and abominable. ... Civil magistrates are to put people to death who practice these things." He also urged listeners and callers to write to state legislators calling for laws that would sentence lesbians and gay men to death. The station manager for KBRT-AM, Costa Mesa, Calif., said Agozino was just encouraging people to follow the "Word of God."

• • •

Stanley A. Meyer of Ohio has invented a "water fuel cell." The device can power cars, machinery and even heating systems, using water instead of fossil fuels. The water fuel cell does not pollute; emissions are a water mist that can be recycled back into the environment. Meyer, a Christian, includes Job 38:22-33 and "Jesus Christ is Lord" as part of his product logo. Meyer claims his life has been threatened by those who are afraid of the impact of his product. Publications and videos on the product are available. Contact Water Fuel Cell, 3792 Broadway, Grove City, OH 43123. *Doug Krehbiel*

Associate editor for marketing and promotion

Associate editor for marketing and promotion for *The Mennonite*, the new publication for an integrated Mennonite church. This quarter-time position requires a college degree and some experience in marketing and promotion work. Duties include working with the editor of the new magazine to plan and implement campaigns for both new and renewing subscribers. Relocation not necessary. Application deadline: **Nov. 30.**

Contact **J. Lorne Peachey at (412) 887-8500, ext. 250,** or e-mail **JLPeachey@aol.com.**

Flatrock Mennonite Church, an established rural congregation located in Flatrock, B.C., 30 miles east of Fort St. John, is seeking a **pastor.** Position open immediately.

Send resume to **Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Brad Giesbrecht, Box 179, Cecil Lake, BC V0C 1G0; (250) 781-3580.**

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open: **Assistant to the director of business affairs** (full-time). Position requires strong business background. Administrative and computer literacy skills necessary.

Send resumes or inquiries to **Jeffrey A. Ambrose, Director of Business Affairs, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Tabor Mennonite Church, rural Newton, Kan., invites application for our newly open **co-pastoral team ministry** position. It is our sense that God is calling a co-pastoral team to our congregation because of our previous success with this model and the ability of co-pastors to blend family and professional goals in this 1.25 FTE position. We are committed to the Anabaptist vision of the power of a congregation of adult believers relating to our community in peace, hope and care for all.

Please contact **Bill Unruh, (316) 367-2411** or **Ray Frey (316) 367-8304,** co-chairs, for further details.

The Mission and Service Commission of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada invites applications for the position of **mission minister.** Responsibilities: (1) Promote the vision for mission in MCEC congregations, (2) give guidance to new churches and projects, (3) resource the commission and the projects and congregations it supports. Qualifications: seminary education, significant pastoral or mission-related experience, some familiarity with Canadian Mennonite congregations. Starting time negotiable; available spring 1998. Application deadline: **Nov. 30.**

Direct applications or inquiries to **Executive Secretary MCEC, 4489 King St. E, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2; (519) 650-3806;** e-mail **maryburk@mcec.on.ca;** fax **(519) 650-3947.**

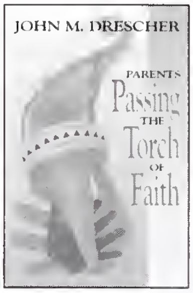
Construction/maintenance person skilled in multiple building trades needed at **Spruce Lake Retreat** in northeast Pennsylvania. Year-round, salaried position.

Call or send resume to **Dick Walter, Spruce Lake Retreat, R.R. 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; (717) 595-7505;** fax **(717) 595-0328.**

Director of children and youth camps at Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp, a rustic, tent-camping program in northeast Pennsylvania. Director is responsible for recruiting 30 to 40 summer staff, orienting and directing staff, and for planning and implementing program. Salaried, year-round position with additional assignments during winter months. Must be committed to Anabaptist perspective.

Call or send resume to **Paul Beiler, Spruce Lake Retreat, R.R. 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; (717) 595-7505;** fax **(717) 595-0328.**

Parents—Passing the Torch of Faith



As Christian parents, we have a primary responsibility to see the faith we embrace be passed on to our children. Simple, yet wise suggestions by **John M. Drescher,** popular speaker, editor, and author of over 35 books, help us move forward with courage, joy, and confidence.

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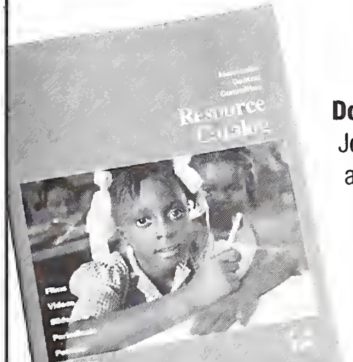

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Reviews

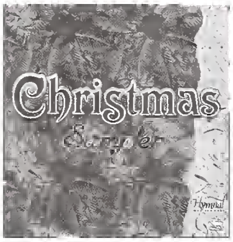
MUSIC

MUSICAL MASTERY

Hymnal Masterworks: Christmas Sampler, *with various artists (Faith & Life Press, 1997, $10.95 U.S./$15 Cdn. cassette; $15.95 U.S./$19.95 Cdn. CD);* **Gather at the River**, *Les Gustafson-Zook and Jon ten Broek (Raindrop Records, $11 U.S./$15.40 Cdn. cassette; $16 U.S./ $22.40 Cdn. CD)*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor

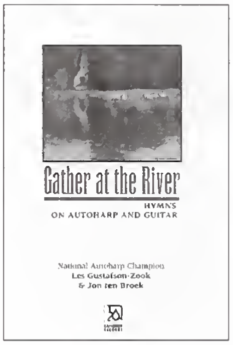
I am not usually a fan of this particular genre of music: instrumental versions of songs that are much more familiar vocalized (hymns, in this case). But I can make exceptions for these two recordings.



The *Christmas Sampler* is the fourth in Faith & Life Press's Hymnal Masterworks series, which is exceptional itself mainly because of the high quality of musicianship found on the recordings. The *Sampler* features 18 well-known Christmas hymns played by five different artists or groups: Tom Harder of Wichita, Kan., who made an earlier Hymnal Masterworks solo recording, on guitar; Les Gustafson-Zook of Portland, Ore., on autoharp; Lucia Unrau of Bluffton, Ohio, on piano; Phil Hawkins of Wichita on steel drums or "pans," and the Chancel Bells of Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan., directed by Vada Snider.

Probably the most pleasant surprise on this recording is Phil Hawkins' pans, both because it's an unusual sound for Christmas music and because of his creative arranging. Easily my favorite cuts were "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," which includes Rachel Pankratz Hawkins on flute, and "Away in a Manger" (using the less familiar tune that is my favorite) with pans and guitar. I would advise Faith & Life Press, if they haven't already, to get busy producing a Phil Hawkins solo Hymnal Masterworks recording.

In general, though, the *Christmas Sampler* is more creative than your run-of-the-mill Christmas instrumental album. I'd have liked to hear some less familiar tunes, but finding "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" on bells with violin, "Angels We Have Heard on High" and the Huron Carol ("'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime") on autoharp and "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" on piano helped make up for that lack.



Les Gustafson-Zook, a national champion on autoharp, would also be a great choice for a Hymnal Masterworks solo album. He and Jon ten Broek have also done a Christmas album, *Cascade Noel*, and they team together well.

As with the *Christmas Sampler*, you'll find familiar tunes on *Gather at the River*. Again, what puts it above the pack is the skill and creativity of the musicians, who do plenty of improvising. In addition, I was impressed by the choice of a number of "old-fashioned" hymns that you don't hear much anymore, such as "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," "In the Garden" and "His Eye is On the Sparrow."

If you want some really nice music, these two recordings will serve you well.

BOOKS

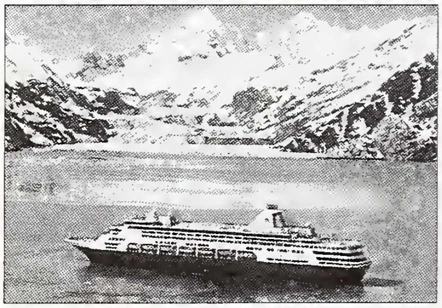
DEEP INTO THE EVERYDAY

Dewdrops on Spiderwebs: Connections Made Visible *by Susan Classen (Herald Press, 1997, 186 pages, $9.99 U.S./$14.25 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Ann Showalter, Hesston, Kan.

Susan Classen has been a long-time development worker with Mennonite Central Committee. She spent three years in Bolivia and a total of 10 years in El Salvador (a number of them during the long and horrible war in that country). She is currently working in Nicaragua.

Here she gives a series of brief reflections from her life experience, under five major themes. Susan has developed a great capacity to probe and explore deeply the everyday, making visible the connections between the daily events of her life and glimpses of God's kingdom embodied



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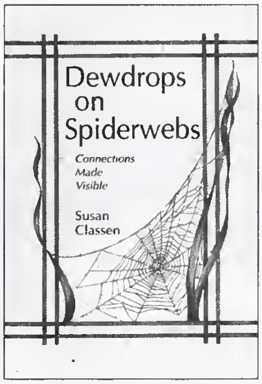
in ordinary people. She discovers where God is present in ways easily missed when life is lived superficially—that is, without further reflection. Each essay begins with a Scripture text and ends with questions for the reader. Her questions prod readers to examine attitudes, commitments, consumerism, experiences of grace, surrender to God, sources of hope and much more.

This is a book that calls for careful, thoughtful, prayerful reading. It is not meant to comfort or please. It grows out of too much personal and communal sacrifice, pain and struggle to give easy comfort. It is a book to ponder, savor and come back to again and again. One catches both the passion and compassion of her commitment to the poor and oppressed. Her inner struggle, her courage and faith shine through the pages.


Dewdrops on Spiderwebs
Connections Made Visible
Susan Classen

In one reflection on surrender, she writes that often the poor are taught a theology that "encourages them to surrender not to a God of love but to passivity and misery." About how she found hope in circumstances many of us would be tempted to think of as hopeless she says, "My disillusionment helped me recognize which of my hopes had been false. It's painful to allow illusions to be stripped away but necessary if I'm to get in touch with truth."

I found the book absorbing, penetrating and inspirational. The incidents she describes and the questions she asks, the truth about life and faith to which she points, held my interest and disturbed my complacency. It is inspirational because she fills the pages with real human beings, who have endured war, refugee camps, hunger, incredible losses and almost unending suffering; yet faith, generosity of spirit and hope are apparent.

I highly recommend the book for those who want to be stretched and urged toward greater awareness of God's work in the world as revealed in and through everyday life.

Resources

● ● ▼

- **Hallelujah! Amen!** is a CD of 15 digitally remastered cuts from the Mennonite Hour radio program, including "The Star and the Wisemen" and "The Stranger of Galilee." The price for the CD is $12.95 U.S./$18.20 Cdn. (audiocassettes are also available). To order, call Mennonite Media at 1-800-999-3534.
- **Just in Time: Stories of God's Extravagance** by Lynn A. Miller (Herald Press, 1997, $8.99 U.S./$12.85 Cdn.) contains true stories that show the connection between God's stewardship and real life.
- **Pontius' Puddle Presents The Peaceable Kingdom and Other Fallacies of Faith** by Joel Kauffmann (Abingdon, 1997, $5.95 U.S.) collects 15 years of cartoons featuring "the First Frog of Faith."

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Editorial

The habit of thanksgiving

Ever wonder what God's will is for you? The apostle Paul gives a succinct answer toward the end of his first letter to the Thessalonians: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

When I was in college, knowing God's will was a frequent concern. What should I major in? What vocation should I pursue? Whom should I marry? Each decision seemed so crucial. Each, it seemed, would set me on a course in life that I could not change.

I was fortunate to have some older, wiser Christian friends who said, in so many words, "Don't sweat it. Concentrate on the majors." In other words, Obey the primary commands, like rejoicing, praying and giving thanks, and the rest will fall into place.

I don't say this to diminish the importance of discernment or to take decision-making lightly. But if we develop the habits of rejoicing, praying and giving thanks, our decision-making will come out of a different perspective.

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, considered the oldest book in the New Testament, describes how Christians should live in the face of the imminent return of Jesus the Lord (4:1-5:11) and how they should strengthen one another in their life together (5:12-22). In light of the coming end of the ages, he writes, act this way: Respect your leaders, be at peace, admonish idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient, do not return evil for evil, do good to all, rejoice, pray and give thanks.

Not a bad list to use as a mission statement. If our churches followed these instructions, our witness to others would be vivid, alive, powerful. But it's more than a to-do list. It's a way to be. As we develop the habits of rejoicing, praying and giving thanks, our character changes, becomes more like Christ.

Habits begin with repeating a practice, over and over, until it becomes a part of us, and we do it almost unconsciously. Practicing thanks, for instance, needs to happen daily, both privately and corporately, whenever possible. And we are to offer unconditional thanks, i.e., "in all circumstances."

Elsewhere, Paul writes, "I have learned to be content with whatever I have" (Philippians 4:11). What a radical witness to our consumeristic, discontented society. Find people giving thanks in all circumstances, content with what they have, and you have found people not "conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2).

Giving habits: Christians in North America have failed in this witness. We cling to things more than we cling to our Creator. This shows up in our giving habits. Our giving to mission beyond our local churches has gone down markedly in the last 30 years. (See "Churches Keeping More Money at Home," page 14.) One researcher of church giving, Sylvia Ronsvalle, said this: "If you want to know what we learned in 25 words or less, giving is down because we don't love God as much as we love a lot of other stuff" (quoted in *Context*).

> *As we develop the habits of rejoicing, praying and giving thanks, our character changes, becomes more like Christ.*

Giving thanks must not only be done frequently but rightly. We are to give thanks *in* all circumstances, not *for* all circumstances. Our two main feature articles (pages 3-8) point out that when we only give thanks for the blessings God has given us, we ignore the plight of others and God's desire that all the earth be blessed.

Our thanks must be wedded to justice. Imagine the hollowness of giving thanks for a large meal if beside you sits a family with little or nothing to eat. Paul's list of how to be includes doing good for all as well as giving thanks.

Developing the habit of thanksgiving is not easy. One place to learn is from poor people, who often are more content (and give more proportionately) than wealthier people.

Practice giving thanks—not only at your worship services, meals or bedtime but throughout the day, with each breath. And especially give thanks when you feel the gnawing presence of discontentment. For our contentment reveals our hope in the coming of our Lord. *Gordon Houser*

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Inside

Is TV a wasteland or a toaster? / p. 10

The verdict on India '97 / p. 11

Christmas gifts for less than $10 / p. 12

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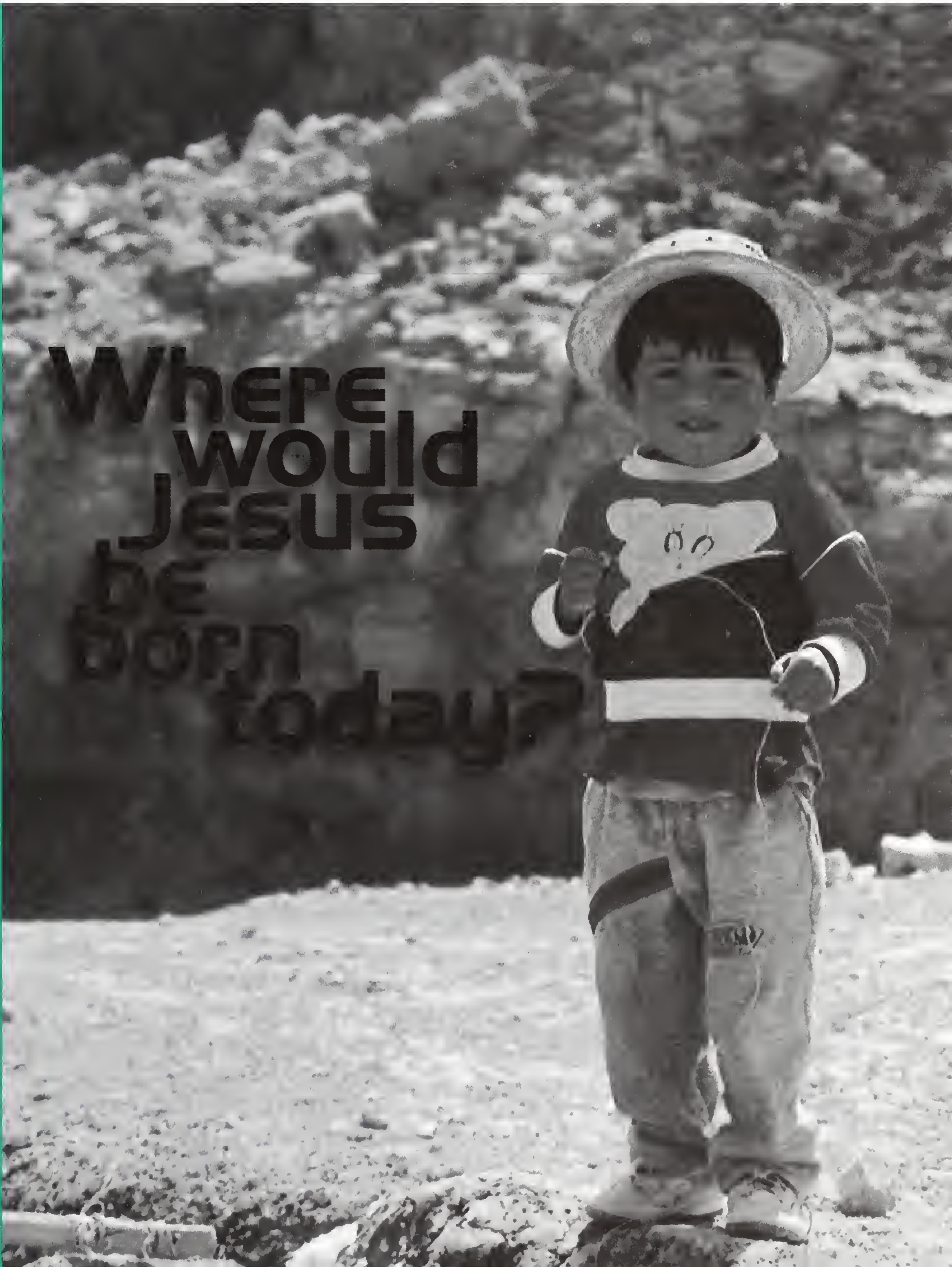
THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 23
DECEMBER 9, 1997

- Christmas Eve in a truck stop (page 3)
- The baby without a name (page 6)
- God is present in celebrations and crises (page 8)



Where would Jesus be born today?

Prologue

Advent is a time to look for the coming of the One who will "guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). We do this through rereading and re-enacting Scripture, through singing and through gathering with other Christians.

This issue encourages us to look for Jesus in those around us. Harriet Richie (page 3) and Frank Soto Albrecht (page 6) offer lessons about looking for Jesus among the poor.

In other features, Burton Buller calls us to become more media literate if we are to help examine the effects of the media on ourselves and our children (page 10).

Phyllis Pellman Good profiles a remarkable woman who helped make last January's Mennonite World Conference Assembly possible (page 11).

And J.B. Miller offers ideas for meaningful Christmas gifts that don't cost much monetarily (page 12).

Our staff (pictured below) wishes you a joyful holiday season. *gh*

Christmas greetings: *Posing in Faith & Life Bookstore in Newton are, from left, John Hiebert, Melanie Mueller, Melanie Zuercher, Gordon Houser and Martha Graber, who records* The Mennonite *on cassette.*

Next issue: The path of humility

Cover: Photo by Frank Soto Albrecht

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General
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Christmas Eve in a truck stop

Did Jesus really come for all people?

Harriett Richie

After the Christmas Eve service, my husband announced that he was hungry for breakfast. "There must be some place open," he muttered. We piled in the car, and our son quickly placed an order for three hamburgers. After driving around for a while we headed down the interstate and finally found a truck stop, which was almost deserted. By now the children were sleepy. My husband led us to the door.

The jukebox was playing something like, "When You Leave, Walk Out Backwards So I'll Think You're Coming In." The only suggestions of Christmas were the multicolored blinking lights strung around the large window. The air smelled of coffee, bacon and stale cigarette smoke. At the counter a one-armed man in a baseball cap was drinking Pepsi from a bottle. Two other men sat around a table talking, eating and drinking. At such an hour I couldn't help wondering where they had come from or were going.

We chose a booth beside the window because the children wanted to see if the lights would make our faces change colors. A thin woman named Rita came to take our order. She looked like any waitress would look who had been unlucky enough to draw the late shift on Christmas Eve. Old for her years, I guessed—she wore her hair tucked behind her ears the way I do when mine won't do anything else. Rita managed a weary-looking smile as she handed us the menus. Our son was holding the salt shaker upside-down, spilling salt into his hand and licking it. I gave him a stare and looked up in time to see Rita wink at him.

"No hamburgers," we told the children. "This is breakfast."

They moaned and ordered pancakes with sausage. They defiantly ate the sausage between the pancakes, hamburger-style.

This wasn't my first breakfast at 1

"If Jesus were born in this town tonight and the choices were our neighborhood, the church or this truck stop, it would be here, wouldn't it?"

RNS—for illustration only

a.m., but the others had been on somebody's china. The snob in me was enjoying feeling out of place. Years from now, I thought, we'll laugh and say, "Remember the Christmas we ate breakfast at that truck stop? That awful music and those tacky lights?"

Volkswagen van: I was staring out the window thinking such thoughts when an old Volkswagen van with Texas license plates and an overload of luggage drove up. A bearded young man in jeans got out. He walked around and opened the door for a young woman who was holding a baby. They hurried inside and took a booth near the back.

"Where you headed?" somebody asked them. I couldn't hear the answer, but I imagined grandparents somewhere anxiously waiting to see their grandchild for the first time.

As Rita took their order, the baby started to cry. The father lifted the baby to his shoulder, but it didn't help. Rita poured them coffee. The mother took the baby and began rocking it in her arms.

"Why doesn't the baby stop crying?" our daughter asked.

"She probably wants something to eat," I told her, remembering all the times I'd tried to drink a quick cup of coffee before a feeding. As if on cue, the baby would demand immediate attention.

The mother picked up the diaper bag and started to leave. She held the baby's head against her neck as if she could muffle the noise.

Rita reached over and held out her arms. "Drink your coffee, hon. Let's see what I can do." There was something about the way Rita took the infant that made me think she'd raised half a dozen of her own. She began talking, walking, playing with the baby. Rita showed her to the man in the baseball cap. He began whistling and making silly faces, and the baby stopped crying. Rita showed her the blinking lights and the lights on the jukebox. She brought her over to us. "Just look at this little darlin'. Mine are so big and grown," she said.

The one-armed fellow took a pot of coffee from a burner and started waiting on the tables. As he finished refilling our mugs, I felt tears in my eyes. My husband wanted to know what was wrong.

"Nothing. Just Christmas," I told him, reaching in my purse for a Kleenex and a quarter. "Go see if you can find a Christmas song on the jukebox," I told the children.

When they were gone, I said, "He'd come here, wouldn't he?"

"Who?"

"Jesus. If Jesus were born in this town tonight and the choices were our neighborhood, the church or this truck stop, it would be here, wouldn't it?"

He didn't answer right away, but looked around the place, looked at the people. Finally he said, "Either here or a homeless shelter."

"That's what bothers me," I said. "When we first got here I felt sorry for these people because they probably aren't going home to neighborhoods where the houses have candles in the windows and wreaths on the doors. And listening to that awful music, I thought, I'll bet nobody here has even heard of Handel. Now I think that more than any place I know, this is where Christmas is. But I don't belong."

As we walked to the car, my husband put his arm around me. "Remember, the angel said, 'I bring good news of great joy to *all* people.'"

"Thanks," I said, but I wasn't reassured.

Car accident: The houses in our neighborhood were dark. As we passed the Milfords I wondered what

Christmas Day would be like for them. Their daughter had died in a car accident during the summer. Next door, Jack McCarthy had lost his job. A little farther down the street lived the Baileys, whose marriage was hanging together by the slimmest thread. Mrs. Smith's grown son had died from AIDS. Maybe we're not so different from the people in the truck stop, I thought.

After we tucked in the children, I picked up a Bible and read, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Then I found the Christmas story in Luke just to be sure it really did say, "I bring good news to all people."

Many Christmases have passed since that night. I still believe that Jesus would be born in what I'd call an unholy place. But rich, poor or in between, we are all poor in spirit. We all have more unhappy memories than anyone would guess and burdens that we never share. In the endless, sometimes meaningless daily grinds, in the comings and goings of our lives, our souls are often far from home whether we know it or not.

In the places where we are broken, in the dark holes where something is missing, in the silence of unanswered questions, the wondrous gift is given.

Harriett Richie is a freelance writer in Anderson, S.C. Copyright 1995 Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission from the Dec. 13, 1995, issue of the Christian Century.

Detail from "The Nativity" by Geertgen Tot Sint Jans (1465-1493), courtesy of the National Gallery of London

Glory be!

Ruth Naylor

Into the dark night
  came the angel song!
Mary had received the promise
  and pondered.
Joseph heard it then
  and wondered.
Shepherds watched
  with awe
as mysterious music wrapped
  their very hillside.
In wonder-filled hope
  they went
to unfold their questions,
  following directions,
receiving the presence
  which lit the darkness
of earth and sang
  Glory to God!
Good news and peace
  to all who hear
and in their very time and place
  receive the angel song.
God's gift of new life
  is now and forever
born in unexpected places!

Ruth Naylor lives in Bluffton, Ohio.

The baby without a name

A father and daughter in Colombia share food and clothes with a homeless family of six. And who is that 16-day-old baby?

Frank Soto Albrecht

I heard the baby cry, and I looked over across the street. There was a family of six—four small children, mother and father—huddled together eating some bread. Father picked up the baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and followed a man, asking him for some change. I had just glanced at them, and kept on walking. The street offered a barrier for me, which meant that I needn't look this family in the eye. I could continue on my way.

Two hours later, as I was walking my daughter Yentli's caretaker to her bus, this family appeared one block from my house. I was talking to Alejandro, my friend from the street, when they appeared. I noticed immediately that the baby was very tiny, wrapped in a T-shirt.

"Would you have an extra pair of shoes, sir?" asked the father. "Maybe an old pair that you no longer need?"

I told him that I use all the shoes I have, but I was concerned about the children.

I noticed that the children had on tank tops, and the little girl, who reminded me of Yentli, had on shorts.

"Where do you come from?" I asked.

"Bucaramunga, where it's hot," said the father.

I noticed they were in no way prepared for the savage wintery weather of Bogota, Colombia. It was cold these days, and wet. Many of us had been cold, even in our homes. These people carried nothing—no sweaters, no bag of clothes, no food, nothing.

"How old is your baby?" I asked.

"He has 16 days," the strikingly beautiful mother replied.

I was taken aback. She also had three other children. What a crisis this family must be suffering. Alejandro searched his bag for something to give them, and he pulled out an old worn but clean blanket in which they could wrap the baby. Everyone was excited. "Come to my house," I said. "Let's see what we can find."

As we walked to our house, the father told me that they came to the big city of Bogota to escape death in their pueblo. (Do I hear a connection between the trip that Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem and the story of this family?) I do not know why people were trying to kill the father, but I do know that the family was afraid. They left their town without any kind of material possessions, with a great chance that they will never return. It's possible the father did something wrong that the people felt he needed to pay for. It's also possible that an injustice was taking place against him. Whatever the case may be, there were at least five people who were innocent, and none of the six deserved to die.

Lentils and rice: I asked them to wait outside, and I went in and heated up some leftover lentils and rice. The family had a simple meal together. Lentils, rice, bananas, water and hot chocolate. When I handed food to the little boys, John and Anderson (ages 5 and 7), they immediately gave their food to their little sister, Marli, age 3. I am always amazed at the way older brothers and sisters take care of their younger siblings here in Colombia. Time after time I have seen this. Of course they were hungry, but even in their pain they thought beyond themselves.

I knew the food would warm them, but only temporarily. I thought about which clothes could be given away. We had no clothes the size of the boys.

I know that during these holidays, Jesus will appear in many forms to Yentli and me, and I want to be ready to embrace him.

Elizabeth Soto Albrecht

A special Christmas: *Frank Soto Albrecht with his daughter Yentli*

I knew Yentli could spare some clothes that she had outgrown that the baby could use. Other than those clothes, I knew I would have to give away some clothes that had significant meaning. I was now down to clothes that people have given to me. I had given away many clothes I had bought myself.

So I went upstairs and first looked for clothes for the baby. That was not too difficult. A warm sleeper, three cloth diapers and plastic pants, a blanket, and a zippered quilt with a hood. As I was looking for something warm for Marli, I noticed Yentli's hooded shawl. It was the first and only jacket we had purchased for her. But she had been using other jackets now that had been given to her. I picked it up and moved on. I looked in my closet for something for the boys. I knew that whatever I gave them would be much oversized. I opted for a sweater and sweatshirt. Both had been gifts to me. Both had significant meaning. But my choices were limited. The sweater, still in great condition, was a gift from my brother-in-law eight years ago. The sweatshirt was a gift for my birthday. It was painful parting with these.

I was reminded, though, of two things. I must not become too attached to my earthly possessions. And, I have money to replace those things that I give away if I need to. These two thoughts helped me make decisions like this.

After giving Marli her shawl, she tucked her head inside and quit eating. She was so excited, shivering in the cold. She promptly spilled her whole cup of hot chocolate on the shawl but that in no way dampened her spirits. I noticed that she didn't even want her hot chocolate.

Trauma: I affirmed the parents, Wilson and Mercedes, for the way they treated their children. They were tender with them, and I had not heard any screaming. It had been obvious that the children were experiencing trauma, for their actions were boisterous and exaggerated.

After supper, we went to the drugstore to buy some disposable diapers and some diaper rash salve. These diapers would replace the T-shirt that was being used for a diaper. I gave them bus money and enough to pay for a boarding room. We crossed the street, and I helped them board a bus that would take them to a room downtown, where they could sleep for the night.

I remember the two small boys waving vigorously from the back of the bus as it sped off. I was also full of questions: Where will they eat today? Where will they sleep tonight? What will their Christmas be like? Will I see them again?

I was so glad that Yentli could be a part of all this, too. She observed all that went on from her privileged seat on my back. I wonder what she saw in this family. Did she also see baby Jesus in this little 16-day-old child, who as yet didn't have a name?

I know that this Christmas will be special for me. I know that during these holidays, Jesus will appear in many forms to Yentli and me, and I want to be ready to embrace him.

Frank Soto Albrecht and Elizabeth, his wife, served three years in Colombia with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church. They now live in Lancaster, Pa.

Silent morning

Ruth Naylor

I rise early
To sit by your manger
And pray,
Expecting no angel song—
Just focusing
For a busy Christmas Day.
Then what to my surprise
I find God's gift!
Gratefully I hold
And then unswaddle
This holiest of mornings.

Ruth Naylor lives in Bluffton, Ohio.

God is present in celebrations and crises

Mission workers in Central America teach and learn about Immanuel, God with us.

Carol L. Wert

In a women's Bible study that meets in her home in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Lynn Baker asked the women gathered in the circle what it meant to them that Jesus was born to poor people. One woman responded eloquently: "Jesus is here with us."

Lynn, along with her husband, Mark, and two daughters, serves under Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Trek, Inc. "Experiencing the Advent season in Honduras instead of the United States [causes us to] reflect on what Immanuel—God with us—means here in this different part of the world," Lynn says.

Over the years the Bakers have observed that most Hondurans view God as strict and accusing. Once Mark gave a weekend seminar on Galatians to a group of campesinos. In the middle of one session a man said, "I now see I have been thinking of God in the wrong way. I have always pictured God sitting in heaven with a pad of paper keeping track of all my mistakes in order to punish me."

He turned to the campesino beside him and asked, "Manuel, how do you picture God?" Manuel said, "I imagine an old man with a long grey beard carrying a whip."

The Bakers encourage Hondurans to take seriously that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, and that they should allow Jesus to shape their concept of God.

In neighboring Guatemala, Janet Breneman and other writers at SEMILLA, the Anabaptist seminary in Latin America, also focus during this Advent season on what Immanuel means. They have created simple outlines and Bible studies that help congregations prepare for Christmas. The series reflects on how mothers (first Sunday), fathers (second), children (third) and churches (last Sunday before Christmas) await the birth of Jesus, the Savior.

"In preparing the reflection about mothers, I wondered with what excitement women await the birth of a child today, and with what excitement all of us, men and women, celebrate Christ's birth today, and await his second coming," says Janet. "But I also thought of all the women who are pregnant because of rape, or lament birth for one reason or another, or only see a new baby as another burden in an already overstressed situation."

Many of the poor in Guatemala have suffered years of indignity and oppression. Over 100,000 have been killed, and many more have disappeared.

"In the stillness of my soul I know that when all is stripped away, God is."

Linda Witmer

However, new hope is rising now that the guerrilla groups and the government have agreed (as of the end of 1996) to sign a peace accord.

EMM worker Linda Witmer serves among one of the indigenous groups, the K'ekchi', in the highlands of San Pedro Carcha, Guatemala. She also questioned how Christ's birth affects the poor when she attended the birth of a K'ekchi' baby. Infant mortality among the K'ekchi' is 84.5 per 1,000, and 11 out of every 100 women die in childbirth.

Seated around the fire after a successful delivery, Witmer heard the 17-year-old father muse, "Do you think Jesus was born in a similar way as my baby?"

"Christ's birth took on new meaning to me as the discussion prompted my thoughts," says Linda. "Christ was born of oppressed people like the K'ekchi'. He likely was born into a similar setting of political instability. Mary and Joseph experienced the same fears we did during that labor and delivery."

Although that holy moment for Linda occurred several years ago, it is sealed in her memory. The same night she celebrated new life with that family, another K'ekchi' family in the same village mourned the death of a mother in childbirth.

"Although I do not understand the mystery of God's ways or comprehend God's wisdom," says Linda, "in the stillness of my soul I know that when all is stripped away, God is. God is present in the ordinary, in the celebrations and in the crises."

Carol L. Wert is a staff writer for Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

Letters

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SAD EVENTS AT GERMANTOWN

I am dismayed by the sad events that are taking place in our Mennonite church (see "Franconia Expels Germantown," Oct. 28, page 13).

It would appear that there is a total lack of love and compassion for others with different lifestyles. How soon will these same people take out their vengeance against those that God created who are left-handed?

One may smile at this—but not too long ago a left-handed child was forced to use his right hand for writing and other functions. And some societies and cultures banned and discriminated against the left-handed because they were considered queer and different.

Isn't it ironic that many of us are here in this country because the Lutheran, Reformed and Catholic churches in Europe banned, ousted and even killed our forebears, and now we are doing the same.

No, we are not literally hanging people or burning them at the stake, but aren't we doing so spiritually?

I grew up in the Old Order Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania. As a youth I rejected the harsh system of banning, shunning and excommunicating church members with whom the church didn't agree. Consequently, I never became a member of the Old Order Mennonite Church.

I only wish those who were involved in the expelling of these congregations would have asked themselves one question: What would Jesus have done? Didn't Jesus always show great love and compassion for those he didn't always agree with? *Jack Stauffer, Newton, Kan.*

WIDEN THE CIRCLE

Some years ago my husband and I were touring with a group that worshiped with Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, on a Sunday morning. Homosexual couples were in charge of the service that morning. They did it all—music, Scripture, prayers, sermon. I found it to be one of the more moving services I had experienced.

Franconia Conference has drawn a circle to shut out some of God's people.

Jesus opened wide his circle to draw in all who wanted to follow him. *Maxlyn Schmidt, Pawnee Rock, Kan.*

HELP WITH DISABILITIES

The Oct. 28 issue is great. The article by Clarence Rempel (page 3) particularly is helpful. I guess I was struck by it because a family with a handicapped child has just come into our church and I don't know quite how to relate to them. I need to learn, and this article is a help, as are the others in that issue on the topic. *Susan Brandt, Winnipeg*

NOT THE FULL STORY

I am dismayed at how completely Melanie Zuercher misrepresented the Mennonite Church in her final two paragraphs of the editorial "Casting Out Fear" (Nov. 11 issue). I expect considerably better of a denominational periodical.

Nothing was said of Germantown's infraction of common courtesy in not removing herself from the Franconia Conference in the two years "grace" granted her by suspension of membership. Nor is any recognition given to the uncounted meetings and conversations with Germantown Mennonite's leaders and/or members regarding their policy. Only the "anonymous, mail-in ballot" is mentioned, which was decided upon only because the polarity was so clear that a face-to-face meeting would have been fruitless. At no point in the two-year suspension was any reconsideration of their policy apparent. Nor have I seen any recognition of the clear difference between the congregation meeting a block or two from the historic building and the historic trust organization that oversees the maintenance of the first Mennonite church building in the New World. But then, I've about given up on seeing any recognition of the full story given by any of the correspondents in either *The Mennonite, Gospel Herald* or the *Mennonite Weekly Review.*

I wonder whether this whole experience is teaching us anything about our radical Reformation heritage or about the erosion that is occurring among us? *Gerald C. Studer, Lansdale, Pa.*

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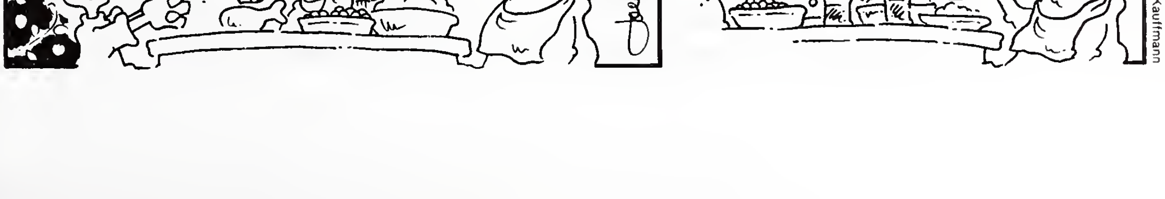
NABBED BY STORY

The Mennonite has many fine, stimulating, enlightening articles. You do an excellent job. Thanks.

The story of the Rhoads family, "A Messenger of God" (Oct. 28 issue, page 6), really nabbed me. Enclosed is a letter I wanted to share with the Rhoads. I am hoping you know their address and could forward the letter to them. *Delpha Graber, Foley, Minn.*

Pontius' Puddle


--SO AS WE PARTAKE OF THIS CHRISTMAS FEAST, LET US NOT FORGET THE BILLION PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO SUFFER FROM CHRONIC MALNOURISHMENT.
Joel
WHY IS IT WE SUDDENLY REMEMBER THE STARVING JUST WHEN WE'RE ABOUT TO CHOW DOWN ON THE BIGGEST MEAL OF THE YEAR?
© Joel Kauffmann

Speaking out

Is TV a wasteland or a toaster?

In our culture, media literacy may be the most important tool we have for moderating the effects of media on our children.

Burton Buller

There's nothing good on television." His statement was matter-of-fact. The response came to a question I had asked about how much television he watched. "Therefore, I don't watch."

Another participant in the Sunday morning conversation in a small, rural congregation listened with an amused look on his face. Later, I discovered he was a teacher in a local school. His response was almost the opposite.

"I almost never miss 'The Simpsons,'" he quipped. "There is so much in that show alone that causes me to think critically. Television is an important part of my life."

Two people. Same church. Same community. Discussing what is arguably the most important influence on the world politic during the second half of the 20th century. And its influence continues to grow.

These polar Christian voices are typical of how people think about television. These views start at the grass roots and extend right up the media ladder into the top echelons of power and influence.

In 1961, the chair of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Newton Minow, addressed the National Association of Broadcasters with what was to become a speech that symbolized television for a generation. "When television is good," he told the gathering, "nothing ... is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on air and stay there. ... I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland."

In 1981, Mark Fowler, newly appointed FCC chair, addressed the National Association of Broadcasters. What he saw was vastly different from what Minow observed. Fowler spoke of the vast richness—a rich array of programming and opportunity—and did not see a vast wasteland.

In an interview in the *Washington Post*, he suggested that we don't regulate washing machines, we don't regulate dishwashers, and television is just another home appliance; it's just a "toaster with pictures."

How about in your home? Is television a vast wasteland for which you feel inclined to apologize? Or is television simply another appliance, useful to do the job for which it was designed, providing a rich array of programming and opportunity? How we answer these questions will define how we as parents approach television viewing with our children.

Worldviews: In the first instance, we may feel forever guilty about seeing our children glued to the television screen. In the second instance, we may forget that the "vast array of programming" includes material inappropriate for youngsters the age of our own children and may exemplify worldviews that are at odds with those we hope to instill.

Likely, both FCC chairs had it right. And both had it wrong. It is not impossible that a television geography composed of a vast array of programming and opportunity has ravines given to unproductive wasteland. Neither is it impossible that some of the geography is composed of fertile soil that yields programs given to cultural richness, intellectual stimulation and critical thinking.

What one finds may even be predetermined by what one looks for. For example, many church members see "The Simpsons" television program as a barren wasteland. Others, like the man I described earlier, see it as an intellectually stimulating exercise, functioning as television's sharpest social critic.

No wonder the subject of television and its programming gets so complicated so quickly. Regulators and producers, sincerely searching for ways to improve television, soon get caught up in the same issues we as consumers do. When two church members from the same church, same background, often from the same family, see such entirely different things in the same program, can we expect producers and regulators to be different?

Where do we look for a road map to guide us through the television landscape? That road map exists only within us and our families. And that road map will be much easier to decipher when we understand how popular culture affects us, what the underlying metaphors and symbols mean—how to "read" television and the movies.

In a culture defined by the media, media literacy may be the most important tool we have in moderating the effects of media on our children. It may even get us talking understandably to each other about programs and their meanings.

> ***The road map [through the television landscape] will be easier to decipher when we understand how popular culture affects us, what the underlying metaphors and symbols mean—how to "read" television and the movies.***

When we can do this, our critique of the media will carry a lot more weight than those based on "wasteland" or "toaster with pictures" underpinnings. And we will be able to make better decisions about how to manage the influence of media on our children.

After all, isn't that the ultimate goal?

Burton Buller directs Mennonite Brethren Communications in Winnipeg. This article is reprinted from the August issue of The Christian Leader.

"Speaking out" and other features do not necessarily reflect the view of *The Mennonite.*

Profile

The verdict on India 1997

This successful conference would not have happened without the persistent work of Margaret Devadason.

Phyllis Pellman Good

Almost 11 months after the closing worship service of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly in India, what is the verdict? It appears that careful, behind-the-scenes work and continual prayer allowed for an event of nearly heaven-like celebration and fellowship. That care also prepared the way for the India Mennonite and Brethren in Christ (BIC) conferences to continue moving toward greater cooperation (where there is a history of some tension) and toward more interest among women and young people in their local congregations.

These developments didn't come without a price and extraordinary tending, however. From the beginning it was the work of a team, but at the hinge-point stood an Indian woman who thought she was about to retire from more than 30 years of management responsibilities.

Margaret Devadason was wrapping up her career with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) when she was invited to join the local coordinating committee assigned to fashion a week-long global Mennonite worship service and reunion in Calcutta.

Initially Margaret was simply a member of the coordinating group. But in time she emerged as the key person, able to help events take shape at the pace required. That reality presented a new problem. Margaret, who is finishing a two-month visit to North American churches, recalls the dilemma. "One of my fears, knowing the churches of India, was that they couldn't accept women in leadership ministries. Finding the right title for me was difficult. I had a long title for a while. Larry Miller [executive secretary of MWC] wanted me to be called the 'director,' but I knew that wouldn't be helpful. Yet my long title was a problem in my correspondence with the government and local businesses, so we settled on coordinator.

Long-reaching effects: Margaret's portfolio went beyond the expected contacts with hotels, bus lines, food caterers and site managers. A Christian event of MWC's proportions, with attendees coming from some 60 countries, had caught the attention of local and national officials. What transpired during that week of worship in January—and all the contacts and activities leading up to it—would have far-reaching effects for all Christians in India, but especially the Mennonites and the work of MCC.

Margaret's strategy was to anticipate the concerns likely to be raised, then address them before they were voiced. "We put together a file of letters from people of some importance to the government, to inform the officials of this event." She gathered supportive letters from the Bishop of the Church of North India, from the Bishop of the West Bengal Roman Catholic Diocese, from Mother Teresa, from the Director of Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India, from MCC and from Miller.

Margaret Devadason

The groundwork began early by India's standards, but the planning group was to hit a snag that could have derailed the whole event. "At that time we didn't know we needed official permission to hold the MWC Assembly. We thought we were cleared by informing the government of our plans." But when Miller applied for a business visa so he could be in India for an extended period leading up to the Assembly, he was denied.

"Only then did we learn that we needed a conference visa, issued by a different ministry in New Delhi than we had been working with.

"I am proud that we gave no bribes to expedite things," says Margaret. "The conference was planned and prayed for. Things would fall in place, maybe just not as fast as we wanted. I believe that perseverance helped.

"Some people mentioned that maybe we should offer money, but I said no. If we would start, there would be no end to this. We had access to all the top people. One gave us his card and said we should call him at his residence and he would help us. And he did. We would go first thing in the morning and he would help us. All of this became an opportunity to talk about our faith."

Margaret says, "Many times people came from the government to check on what we were doing. It meant having patience and being a little pushy, but always being nice.

"It turned out to be easier to get the conference visa than Larry's visa." But after persistent contacts in New Delhi, Margaret called Miller with the news of clearance in September 1996, eight months after he had hoped to be in India. "He came right away," she says, remembering the relief of finally having him present to help with decisions for the event that was then only three months away.

Ever mindful of the fact that the Mennonite and BIC churches of India were the hosts of India 1997—and that there is no Mennonite or BIC congregation in Calcutta—Margaret and members of the coordinating team visited all the conferences' areas throughout India three times before the event, and one time since.

The Assembly has been an "awakening" for these scattered, small fellowships, Margaret says. "People have felt that we are so small. The event thrilled them. For many it was the first time for them to discover the others. In the Global Church Village at the Assembly there was a whole section about the Mennonite and BIC churches of India, where each conference had exhibit space. Now the different conferences are talking about all meeting together every two years."

Significant also were the numbers of Indian women and young people at India 1997. "Usually it's only Indian men who attend these events," says Margaret. "But there were many subsidies designated for women and for youth this time. Many village women came. Now many women will begin to be involved in their congregations—even in leadership. Their skills have

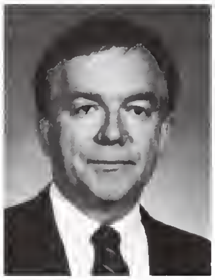
continued on next page

Fiscal health

Christmas gifts for less than $10

Spend time rather than money on relationships this Christmas.

J.B. Miller



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Christmas lights have been up for weeks already. The stores are crammed with decorations and window displays. Signs of the approaching holidays are everywhere. People will shop, charge items that they can't afford to pay on credit cards, and get caught in a cycle of believing that Christmas is meaningless unless gifts are purchased and given. Some people, no matter when they start their Christmas shopping, never finish; there is always "one more gift" to be purchased. And now it's so convenient that Christmas shopping can be done from the comfort of our living rooms using a toll-free number.

But there are ways to celebrate Christmas and giving gifts that won't result in maxing out our credit cards. In fact, they may be the most memorable gifts given this Christmas. True, you may have to leave the comfort of your home for some of them, but in January you won't be looking at your credit card statements wondering, "Did I really spend that much money on Christmas this year?"

Some of the most memorable Christmas gifts I've received did not cost the giver a great deal in monetary terms. They were the gifts of letters from friends and family that I hadn't heard from in a long time, a phone call from someone who had severed a relationship years ago asking for reconciliation, or the gift of homemade bread and pastries, something I didn't have time to make myself. I remember those gifts because they were different from the stationery, sweaters, scarves and all the other things that make up our gift-giving each year.

Here are some suggestions for memorable gifts, none of which will cost more than $10:

1 Write a letter to someone with whom you haven't communicated in a while because a relationship was severed. Although this may be the most difficult, it may also be the most rewarding. Not long ago I did just that. I wrote a letter to someone who I felt had wronged me. As difficult as it was, I asked for forgiveness if I had done something wrong (even though I thought this person should be asking me for forgiveness). The result of that letter was wonderful. I received a phone call from this person, and while there were misunderstandings, we both committed to working at putting our friendship back together.

2 Spend a little time going through old pictures, select several and send them to people in the photos. It's a great way to re-establish contact with people from the past, and many times it will bring a smile to their faces.

3 Most of us have Sunday school or classroom teachers who were positive influences in our lives. Even though they may not be on our Christmas card list anymore, write a letter expressing thanks for how they have shaped your life.

4 Invite an elderly person along when you go shopping. Driving can often be a problem for the elderly, yet the opportunity to get out of the house for a few hours can be a real boost.

5 Look across your congregation on Sunday morning. Who is there who might not have a place to spend Christmas Day? Invite them to your house. Even if they already have plans, they will be grateful that you thought of them.

None of these gift suggestions are necessarily easy, and they can't be charged to our credit cards. They all require something valuable—our time. Giving this valuable commodity is one expression of our understanding of the gift that God gave to us—the gift we celebrate this season.

PROFILE *continued*

been demonstrated."

Assembly Scattered, which arranged for international visitors to travel to Mennonite and BIC communities in India, was another plus for the India Mennonite churches. "Even the illiterate people felt bold enough to be part of this," Margaret says. Some 700 foreigners who registered for India 1997 participated in Assembly Scattered (about half of those who attended the conference from outside India).

The Mennonite World Conference office in Calcutta has closed. But the event hosted so miraculously seems to have brought promise and hope to India's small churches who, through it all, got some taste of their global family and even their Mennonite and BIC neighbors.

India 1997 has been a catalyst for greater life throughout the country. Margaret believes that the Mennonite World Conference activity "bridged many of the conflicts within the Mennonite churches in India. We didn't ask who was on which side when we visited congregations, and we didn't have the problems that they have with each other."

Margaret, who continued to solve problems during the week of India 1997, tried to join two events each day of the Assembly—"Teatime, when you could move around and talk to people you wouldn't otherwise have met if we had all been sitting in meetings," and "the afternoon women's meetings. I wish I could have attended more."

And then this strikingly humble woman makes a penetrating statement. "In India many young people and women go to other churches because they don't have leadership opportunities in their home congregations. I would like to see more young people and more women participate in big events like India 1997, and in week-to-week church life, in order to have the faith continue."

Phyllis Pellman Good, Lancaster, Pa., has served on the General Council of Mennonite World Conference.

News

Staff named for new magazine

Scottdale, Pa.—J. Lorne Peachey, editor of the new Mennonite publication that will replace *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald*, has announced staff appointments. The new periodical will also be called *The Mennonite*.

Gordon Houser, Newton, Kan., will serve as associate editor on a 4/5-time basis, with responsibilities for features and columns. Editor of the current *The Mennonite* since 1992, Houser was editorial assistant and then assistant editor of that publication since 1978.

Also from Newton, Rich Preheim will be a full-time associate editor of the new publication with responsibility for news. He is currently associate editor of *Mennonite Weekly Review*, where he has worked since 1992.

Judith Rempel Smucker, a free-lance designer from Akron, Pa., is designing the new publication. After initial design and graphics standards work, Smucker will serve the new magazine as a design consultant.

A quarter-time staff position in marketing is still in the process of being filled, says Peachey.

The new publication will have two support staff, each serving half-time: Dotty Anderson in the Scottdale office and Melanie Mueller in Newton. Anderson is currently secretary for *Gospel Herald* and Mueller editorial assistant for the current *The Mennonite*.

Overseeing the work of the new magazine staff is an Interim Periodical Board that will serve as the magazine's publisher until integrated structures are in place and the magazine receives a more permanent "home." Serving on the IPB are the following:

- Appointed by the Division of General Services of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), publisher of the current *The Mennonite*: Larry Cornies, assistant city editor for the London (Ont.) *Free Press* , and Dave Linscheid, Newton, Kan., GC communications director;
- Appointed by the Mennonite Publication Board, current publisher of *Gospel Herald*: Ron Guengerich, pastor, Archbold, Ohio, and J. Robert Ramer, publisher, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa.;
- Appointed by the Mennonite Church General Board: J. Ron Byler, Goshen, Ind., associate general secretary;
- Appointed by the General Conference Mennonite Church General Board: Cheryl Zehr Walker, director of communications at Bluffton (Ohio) College. Walker serves as IPB chair.

The IPB has put in place an advisory group to review and critique plans for the publication as well as decisions made by the board. This advisory group will also provide feedback to the staff of the new *The Mennonite* once it begins publication.

Agreeing to serve on this advisory group to date are Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, Lancaster, Pa.; Sharon Britten Miller, San Francisco; Barth Hague, Goshen, Ind.; Hope Kauffman Lind, Harrisonburg, Va., Jane T. Roeschley, Graymont, Ill.; David Waldowski, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Stuart Showalter, Goshen, Ind.; Vern Rempel, Denver.

More appointments to this advisory group are pending, says IPB chair Walker.

The new staff held its first meeting Nov. 14-16 to review plans for the new *The Mennonite*. It will be printed 48 times per year with a Tuesday publication date, in a two-color, magazine format.

The first issue of the new magazine is scheduled for Feb. 17, 1998. Both the current *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald* will cease publication as of Jan. 27, 1998.

The new *The Mennonite* will maintain two offices: one at 722 Main Street in Newton, and the other at 616 Walnut Avenue in Scottdale. Readers will be able to contact either office for editorial and subscription services.

At their meeting, *The Mennonite* staff worked on both content and design details for the first issues of the new magazine. Circulation and advertising rates as well as graphics standards are being developed and will be released in mid-December.

Plans call for the new *The Mennonite* to be printed at Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, for the first year. After that, printing and subscription services will be let out for bids.

Inside the news

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Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., celebrated its centennial Nov. 7-9 with a talent night, music concerts, crafts and art exhibits, a fellowship meal and worship. Sunday morning worship featured a cantata, "The Timeless Love of God," with text by Ruth Unrau and music by J. Harold Moyer. Sunday afternoon worship included an alumni bell choir, directed by former member J. Randall Zercher. Sunday school children spent the summer creating a clay mural depicting the history of the congregation.

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A label from a can of beef donated by North American Mennonites reportedly was found on a stranded North Korean spy submarine, according to South Korean sources. The label, presumably from a meat shipment Mennonite Central Committee sent to Korea in June 1996, has raised suspicions that North Korea is diverting foreign relief from starving people to the military. On the other hand, the allegation may be an attempt to discredit North Korea. Ray Brubacher, director of MCC's overseas program, is confident at this time that MCC-donated food is going where it is supposed to go, and he says the incident won't keep MCC from sending more food aid to North Korea. (*Gospel Herald*)

The Ann Arbor, Mich., 1-W unit is having a reunion Sept. 4-6, 1998. For information, contact Jim Drescher, P.O. Box 385, Talmage, PA 17580.

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Helen Loewen, who died Sept. 30, 1996, at age 89, restored dolls for the Mennonite Central Committee thrift shop in Winkler, Man. "I'm feeding hungry children," she explained. Her work over the years brought in thousands of dollars for MCC. On Oct. 4, more than 260 of Loewen's dolls from her own collection were sold at an auction, bringing in $2,525.28 for MCC children's projects in Swaziland and Vietnam. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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A revised version of materials for Living in Faithful Evangelism is in production. The materials can also be used by congregations who previously completed LIFE or "Passing on the Promise." LIFE is a two-year study process to aid congregations in doing outreach. The new LIFE process will be available for congregational use by September 1998. For more information, contact the Commission on Home Ministries at (316) 283-5100; Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries at (219) 294-7523, or Conference of Mennonites in Canada at (204) 888-6781.

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A new Hymnal Subscription Service is now available to provide new tunes, texts and worship materials on an ongoing basis. The service will release two issues per year and will grant limited photocopying rights to subscribers. The first issue includes accompaniment to Andrae Crouch's "Soon and Very Soon," an Alice Parker setting for women's voices, some new hymns by Mennonites, a page of suggestions for hymn use for children and a Spanish creed for Christian worship. Subscriptions for congregations are $40 U.S./$56.95 Cdn. from Herald Press, 1-800-245-7894 or e-mail Levi%mph@ mcimail.com.

Will the real Dennis Good ...?

Dave Linscheid

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The positive spirit at a recent joint publishers meeting held close to Halloween spilled over into a bit of clowning.

Editorial and administrative staff from the Commission on Education and Faith & Life Press of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Publishing House (MPH)/ Herald Press of the Mennonite Church met Oct. 27-28 at COE/FLP offices in Newton and came to a staff coffee break "in costume" as COE executive secretary and FLP publisher Dennis M. Good.

The publishers group has an established history of meeting together. However, for a space of about 18 months, no such meetings took place. They started up again in January of this year, with the most recent in October.

Attending were (below, seated, from left): Good and MPH publisher and president Robert Ramer; (standing, from left) congregational publishing marketing manager for Herald Press J.W. Sprunger, FLP director of customer services Christopher Scott, MPH vice president and director of congregational publishing for Herald Press Levi Miller, FLP production coordinator Terry Graber and FLP editorial director Byron Rempel-Burkholder. As with so much else in the Mennonite world these days, merger focused the meetings.

"It was a very positive, constructive time," says Good. "Our conversation focused largely on what we can do now in cooperation, to anticipate what might happen [further] with integration.

"We're [eventually] going to be a single publisher, so we're saying, Let's work on what we can do jointly now, in a positive way."

"One of the values of us getting together was to talk about common needs that we have to meet to survive in the future," says Ramer. "For example, how do we avoid publishing things that have no chance of covering their costs? Or, how can we study and adjust our distribution methods to avoid duplication—in other words, to work as though we have one inventory?"

One agreement was to work on common pricing and discount policies for congregational literature (Sunday school curriculum and related material). Once these are established, sometime after the first of the year, each publisher will pick up the other's congregational literature products for their respective catalogs.

Dave Linscheid

A related issue is order fulfillment—how to get each other's products into each other's warehouses (Newton and Winnipeg for FLP; Scottdale, Pa., and Waterloo, Ont., for Herald Press).

Although only a handful of decisions resulted from this meeting, Good says that "the positive spirit" was an important outcome."When there were differences, we were able to disagree agreeably," he says.

Mennonites feel effects of 'forgotten' war

Kinshasa (Meetinghouse)—It's the civil war about which North Americans know almost nothing.

While Western news media have mostly ignored the violence and bloodshed in the Republic of Congo, Mennonites in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), haven't had that luxury. Their lives have been endangered by the cross fire and their compassion for refugees has moved them to act.

Most North Americans probably don't even realize that the Republic of Congo exists as a separate country from the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC). The only thing that separates these two nations—and their capital cities, Brazzaville and Kinshasa—is the mighty Congo River.

Since June, two ethnic-political forces have been fighting for control of the Republic of Congo. In mid-October, soldiers with the Cobra militia of former dictator Gen. Denis Sassou-Nguesso finally captured Brazzaville from the forces loyal to President Passcal Lissouba.

But by then, not much of Brazzaville was left to possess. The city was all but decimated by the prolonged fighting and the vast majority of its citizens had fled.

Across the river, the sounds of exploding mortar shells could be heard almost daily. In early October, more than a dozen shells from Brazzaville fell in Kinshasa, killing 25 people, including 16 children. One shell landed within a few blocks of where Mennonite Central Committee staff members live. Rick and Marilyn Derksen, workers with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission have also been in Kinshasa throughout the fighting in Brazzaville.

Many Kinshasans suspect the "accidental" bombing was the work of former Zaire president Mobutu loyalists hoping to destabilize the tenuous political transition in the RDC. After current president Kabila ordered retaliatory shells fired into Brazzaville, Kinshasa was not attacked again, and life there returned to a state of relative normalcy.

But the incident was a vivid reminder of the precarious nature of daily existence in this part of the world. "There is no safe place in our country and our Central African region," says Pakisa Tshimika, a Mennonite Brethren leader and physician.

Many Brazzaville citizens crossed the Congo River to find refuge in a camp established in Kinkole, outside Kinshasa. The camp, built to accommodate between 1,500 and 2,000 people, had drawn more than 30,000 by early October.

Mennonites in Kinshasa, facing economic challenges of their own, were moved to help. Nzash Lumeya of the Mennonite Brethren conference in Congo, with assistance from Tshimika, has spearheaded efforts to raise local awareness, coordinate prayer services, recruit volunteers and gather contributions of food, medicine, money and clothing.

The response has been helpful, but not overwhelming. The most recent citywide, cross-denominational prayer service, held Oct. 5 in the spacious Protestant Cathedral in Kinshasa, drew fewer than 100 people. But those who came donated more supplies than previous gatherings that had drawn several times more people. *Don Ratzlaff, editor of* Christian Leader, *for Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group*

Don Ratzlaff

Neighbors in need: *Mennonites in Kinshasa have been trying to help their neighbors across the river in Brazzaville who have been suffering because of civil war. Here, volunteers sort donated clothing.*

Ben Jeske, of Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church in British Columbia, cycled across Canada this summer and raised $25,000 for Mennonite Central Committee work in Haiti. To celebrate, Jeske participated in a 50-kilometer cyclathon at the Abbotsford (B.C.) MCC relief sale and festival. The cyclathon raised an additional $18,000 for MCC Haiti. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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Christian Peacemaker Teams will open an office in Toronto to focus on work with Native people in Canada. At an October meeting in Chicago, the CPT steering committee discussed conflicts in Ontario over Native fishing rights and unfair treatment of First Nation peoples. CPT will hold a training event in Ontario next spring. Doug Pritchard will work part-time in the Toronto office.

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In September, 24 people completed two weeks of training as stewardship education consultants. The training included a "money autobiography" retreat and practicing a stewardship diagnostic on case study congregations. The consultants are available to help congregations. For congregations and area conferences interested in training a consultant, there will be a second round of training, June 23-27, 1998. Call The Giving Project at (219) 296-6236 for more information.

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Churches in 40 of the most dangerous U.S. neighborhoods are working to deal with urban violence and "black-on-black" crime. Operation 2006, modeled on a five-year-old Boston effort, is a program that will reach out to at-risk youth through mentors, work programs and counseling. The program works with law enforcement and business, offering an alternative to drugs and gangs. Black churches in the program will serve as sanctuaries for youth. The Boston group has been credited with helping last year's murder rate drop by 39 percent. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

Sunday school children at Waterloo (Ont.) North Mennonite Church transformed a small portion of church property into a bird and butterfly garden. The project is an outgrowth of a Sunday morning Bible study dealing with the environment. The garden restores some native species and habitat that had been lost through urbanization. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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Eastern Mennonite Missions has integrated its voluntary service program into Youth Evangelism Service. The decision to end the domestic voluntary service program was not an easy one, but church leaders felt it was time to search for new models of service. Diversification of the YES program, an increase on the focus of discipleship training and a decrease in applications for the program were factors in the decision. *Carol L. Wert*

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Murray Hiebert was sentenced to three months in a Malaysian jail for writing a news story suggesting a conflict of interest in a court case (see Sept. 9 issue, page 13). Hiebert, a former Mennonite Central Committee worker in South Vietnam and Laos, is a bureau chief for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. He is now out on bail awaiting an appeal. The judge assigned to hear Hiebert's appeal is the husband of the woman who filed the original suit against him. (*ChristianWeek*)

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The United States has the highest wage inequality of any industrialized nation and, despite a booming global economy, 841 million people in developing countries are chronically undernourished. Four million U.S. households suffer from moderate to severe hunger. *Hunger in a Global Economy—Hunger 1998* identifies 10 ways to make the global economy work better for hungry people. For more information, contact Bread for the World at (301) 608-2400, or www.bread.org/media.

Sisters-in-law help heal divisions

Patastule, Nicaragua (MCC)—This small desert village is not a place where one might expect to find a lot of conflict. And there isn't. But when problems do arise, such as water disputes around the well or animals wandering into yards and fields, tensions can quickly become heated and divisive.

Two Nicaraguan Mennonite women who live in Patastule, Brunilda Morales and Petrona Alvardo de Barbarena, have been trained as peace promoters by the Nicaraguan Mennonite Church Peace Commission. They hope what they have learned about conflict resolution will help the community solve problems.

Mark Beach

Springs in the desert: *Petrona Alvardo de Barbarena and Brunilda Morales have been trained to help resolve conflict in their Nicaraguan village.*

"This region is dry and the people are poor," Morales says. "We want to live here and show God's support for our neighbors."

"Our hope is to have better communication within the community," says Barbarena, who is also a sister-in-law to Morales. "The majority of conflicts are small, but we want to address them."

"What happens in the community and church is [that] conflicts do come up," Morales says. "Conflict resolution is a tactic to solve those problems. Many people experience conflicts but don't have the tools to solve them."

Some situations might seem insignificant to people living in the capital city, Managua, or in North America. But for a close-knit village like Patastule, conflicts have the potential to tear apart the social fabric.

"For example, if someone goes to the bathroom in the river and we drink some of the river water, that is a problem," Morales says. "When someone intervenes, that other person doesn't like it. Or, at the wells, someone wants more water than others. So we have conflict."

"In the past, it was terrible," Barbarena says, describing how communities normally dealt with conflict. "People have weapons, they would fight, they wouldn't talk to each other.

"But now it is different. We are trying to learn different ways, we try to reconcile each other, love each other."

Morales and Barbarena work with two other promoters from another village. During the past two years they have conducted 40 to 50 conflict resolution workshops in their region.

Most often women attend the conflict resolution workshops. Men have interest, they say, but just do not attend as often.

The workshops bring a sense of empowerment to the church members, particularly the women. For the first time they feel free to speak in church, Morales says.

"We want to focus on the idea that we all have the right to speak and be listened to," Barbarena says.

For both women, teaching conflict resolution is an integral part of their Christian witness. Morales sees their efforts like work in the fields and the good harvest that can follow, even in a dry land. When the harvest comes, it must be shared.

"If there is a harvest, there is hope," she says. "Because if our neighbors have nothing, we can share with them."

For Barbarena, resolving conflicts goes back to the beginning. "We start with Genesis, with the first conflict. Humans turned their back on God—God resolved the conflict by sending his son. That is the main point." *Mark Beach*

Former volunteer says thanks, with interest

Newton, Kan. (GCMC/MBM)—Many new college graduates who want to do voluntary service face the daunting question: How can I afford it?

"Prospective volunteers, many from Mennonite colleges, quickly tell you that they still have student loans and they ask whether we have any way of helping them pay those off," says Brad Reimer, Mennonite Voluntary Service associate director for Canada. MVS is a joint program of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church.

One Canadian couple, members of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, recently addressed the issue themselves. Lilli Janzen-Williams and her husband, Stewart, sent a check to the MVS office in Winnipeg, designating the money solely for student loans. Lilli, an MVS worker in Seattle from 1990 to 1992, said the check was a repayment for her own student loan, which MVS had paid, plus interest.

"I think that's the first time anyone has done a thing of such magnitude," says Reimer. "It's a big help."

Lilli, whose career direction was influenced by her work at Our Place Day Care Center for homeless children in Seattle, says she has kept track of MVS's payments on her loan. "I really did feel that that was my responsibility and that it was a loan," she says. "I saw it as a way of helping me out. ... It took me a while but with getting a job and buying a house and the different things that have gone on since then, now finally I felt like I could pay that back with some extra donation. I think it's important that [MVS] help people like they did me and that they continue to do that for other young adults who are stuck with their student loans."

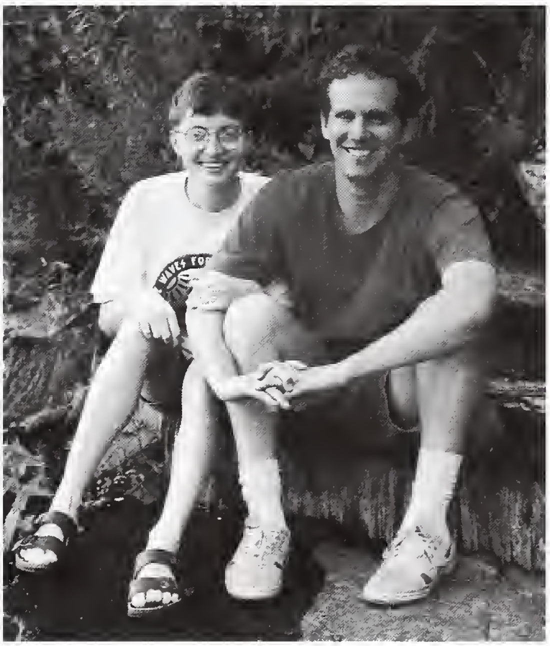
One way MVS has tried to stretch its limited student loan money is to work with local MVS sites, says Reimer, spreading the monthly repayment cost among the sponsoring congregation, the agency that the volunteer is serving and MVS.

"Our goal is to at least pay the interest," he says, "so that you're no further in debt when you leave than when you entered.

"I'm hoping this will bring up some larger debates about student loans. I think a lot of people give to the conference, but the money that is budgeted for MVS is for running our program. Most of that does not allow us to pay off or help pay off student loans."

Strong supporters: Reimer hopes the Janzen-Williams' example will encourage others to give to MVS over and above their conference giving. "I know Lilli and Stewart are strong supporters of conference and the local church and I think they found themselves in a position to say, 'Hey, we give money to the church in general and we know that it goes for good programming and we know it goes to MVS, but we know there's a need specifically for monies to be set aside for helping people with their student loans, and that's what we're going to do with this money.'"

Lilli is currently a regular classroom teacher at Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary but says she hopes to get back into working with needy children in some way. "My work with homeless children," she says, "made me feel like there was a real need for people to reach out to kids like that who fall through the cracks." *Cynthia Snider*



Returning the favor: *Lilli and Stewart Janzen-Williams paid back the money that Mennonite Voluntary Service spent to help Lilli with school loans when she was an MVS volunteer.*

Residents of Greencroft retirement community in Goshen, Ind., are praying for first-year students at Goshen College. Sylvia Shirk Charles, campus pastor at the college, provides names of interested students to the Greencroft residents, who remain anonymous. Last year Tania Momotiuk received cards and letters from someone who was praying for her. Says Momotiuk, "I kept all the cards. It is something I will never forget." (*Gospel Herald*)

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Tony Campolo told a recent gathering of Protestants and Catholics in Belfast, Northern Ireland, that prejudice lies at the heart of that country's continuing violence. Campolo compared the hostility between Catholics and Protestants to racial tension in the United States. During Campolo's visit he was confronted by Protestant leader Ian Paisley, who said he would attend a prayer breakfast if Campolo would declare Mass to be a pagan ritual and any mention of Mary as idolatry. "Will you do that?" asked Paisley. Campolo replied, "To tell you the truth, I was planning to talk about Jesus." (*EAPE Campolo Ministries*)

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Ephrem Micaiah, a 1997 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, received first prize in the 1997 C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest. Micaiah, from southern Sudan, where a 40-year-long conflict has been raging, related the conflicting emotions and thoughts that raged through him as he struggled to grasp the concept of Christian nonviolence. Tasha Clemmer, of Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont., placed second; Jay Brubaker, Bluffton (Ohio) College, placed third. The C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest began in 1974 to encourage thought on peace issues. The annual contest for college students is administered by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries.

A new long-term study of divorce finds that children of divorced parents continue to suffer negatives from the family break-up into adulthood, reports EP News. In interviews with 130 children, conducted over a 25-year period, people spoke sadly of a lost childhood, "their yearning for someone to take care of them." Family break-ups also left children more prone to drug and alcohol use and early sex. (*ChristianWeek*)

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Brazilian slum-dwellers are being lured into Brazil's interior with false promises of high wages clearing land for cattle ranches. They end up in slavery, sickness, torture and death, claims Bishop Herbert Hermes, a Benedictine monk who has worked in Brazil since 1962. On their way into the interior, workers are given liquor so they won't know where they are going. When the workers arrive, their documents are taken away and they get a bill for transportation, food and drink; they're in debt for the rest of their lives. The Pastoral Land Commission, with whom Hermes works, is distributing flyers to slum-dwellers warning them of the danger. Figures for 1995 estimated 26,000 slave workers. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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At least 100 churches in Alberta have received gambling funds over the past four years. Calgary pastor Jim Wallace met with an Alberta cabinet minister earlier this summer to voice concerns about video lottery terminals. The cabinet minister told him that churches received millions of dollars from Alberta's gaming commission for various projects. From 1993 to the present, Alberta churches applied for and received $3,669,022 in gambling revenues. Alberta receives a higher percentage of revenue from gambling than any other Canadian province, and the average Albertan puts more money—$214 per year—into gambling than any other Canadian. (*ChristianWeek*)

'Tie-dings' of comfort

Mark Beach

Ephrata, Pa. (MCC)—On a cool fall evening, this group of friends could have gone on a hay ride or roller skating. Instead, members of the fifth and sixth grade Sunday school class at Ephrata Mennonite Church chose to spend an evening in the basement of their teacher's home, knotting a comforter. Pictured here are, front row from left, Adrienne Zimmerman, Brittany Witmer, Janelle Zimmerman, Rachel Fry; back row from left, Charissa Good, Jessica High, teacher Carolyn Weaver and Nitzah Santiago.

Their effort was part of Mennonite Central Committee's "Comfort 'n Joy" bundles project to provide Christmas cheer for people in war-torn former Yugoslavia. More than 7,200 bundles have been collected across Canada and the United States, exceeding MCC's goal of 6,000—and bundles continue to arrive.

The bundles will be distributed to refugees in Serbia (now called Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) during December through MCC partner Bread of Life, a Christian humanitarian group. When Bread of Life staff received news of the thousands of bundles that were flooding MCC offices in North America, they said, "Wow! The Mennonites make miracles look routine!"

Harold Otto, MCC worker in Belgrade, Serbia, who reported the conversation, says, "At a time when most donors have moved on to other crises, MCC's kind and faithful responses to the many needs in the former Yugoslavia have a big impact." ***Mark Beach and Pearl Sensenig***

Dallas is 1998 City on a Hill

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church has named Dallas, Texas, as its 1998 City on a Hill.

The City on a Hill project was begun by CHM in 1994 to support Mennonite urban church work that models a holistic approach to the gospel.

This year's award is $25,000 U.S., representing a 25 percent increase from the $20,000 U.S. awarded in previous years.

The focus of the Dallas City on a Hill proposal is on planting a new church, under the auspices of Western District Conference, in the Dallas metropolitan area, probably South Arlington.

Of the four Mennonite congregations that exist in Dallas, three—Comunidad de Esperanza, Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Dallas and Iglesia Cristiana Menonita Luz del Evangelio—are Spanish-speaking. The new church plant would be English-speaking but aimed at a diverse population. A little more than half of Dallas' 2 million residents are Anglo, with the other half largely Hispanic and African-American.

"Our role as the City on a Hill will be to encourage the potential multicultural, multiracial nature of this church plant," says Dick Davis, pastor at Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas.

The proposal, written by a committee from the Dallas Mennonite churches, notes that, in addition to the church plant, there are many evangelistic and service-oriented projects in the Dallas area that reflect Anabaptist-Mennonite values. These include a Mennonite Voluntary Service unit and the Dallas Peace Center.

A City on a Hill coordinating committee made up of representatives from the four congregations will work on discerning which projects fit best into the vision for City on a Hill.

"We dream that Mennonites in Dallas continue to be highly visible and known for their peacemaking and peaceable living, their advocacy of justice and their ministry to the whole person, the whole family and the whole congregation," says Davis.

City on a Hill grants have gone previously to Vancouver (1997), Denver (1996), Toronto (1995) and Fresno, Calif. (1994). *Melanie A. Zuercher*

The Mission and Service Commission of the **Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada** invites applications for the position of **interim mission minister**. The incumbents have accepted a congregational assignment. The request is for an interim staff person from April 15, 1998, to June 30, 1999, while the job description is reviewed.

Responsibilities: (1) promote the vision for mission in MCEC congregations, (2) give guidance to new churches and projects, (3) resource the commission and the projects and congregations it supports. Qualifications: seminary education, pastoral or mission-related experience, some familiarity with Canadian Mennonite congregations. Application deadline: **Dec. 20.**

Direct applications or inquiries to **Executive Secretary MCEC, 4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2; (519) 650-3806**; fax **(519) 650-3947**; e-mail **maryburk@mcec.on.ca**.

Director of children and youth camps at Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp, a rustic, tent-camping program in northeast Pennsylvania. Director is responsible for recruiting 30 to 40 summer staff, orienting and directing staff and for planning and implementing program. Salaried, year-round position with additional assignments during winter months. Must be committed to Anabaptist perspective.

Call or send resume to **Paul Beiler, Spruce Lake Retreat, R.R. 1 Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; (717) 595-7505**; fax **(717) 595-0328.**

Visit our web site:

www2.southwind.net/~gcmc/tm.html

Goshen College seeks a full-time tenure-track faculty member to direct the **speech program** and to teach additional courses as appropriate. Level of appointment and salary will depend on experience and degree(s) held. Interviews will begin after Jan. 1, 1998, and will continue until the position is filled. Responsibilities begin Aug. 15, 1998. A master's degree in communication or speech (or closely related area) is required, and candidates with the doctorate or ABD are highly desirable. Teaching experience is required, and additional experience as a professional communicator is preferred. Women and members of underrepresented groups are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Faculty members are expected to share a commitment to this mission.

To apply, please send a resume and three professional references to: **Paul Keim, Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526-4795**, phone **(219) 535-7503**, fax **(219) 535-7060**, e-mail **dean@goshen.edu**. Applications are welcomed through the Goshen College web site at **www.goshen.edu**.

Meet a weight watcher ...

Record

Seven-year-old Palestinian Ali al-Jawareesh died in an Israeli hospital Nov. 15, three days after an Israeli soldier shot him in the head during a clash near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. After he was shot, according to witnesses, not one soldier went to the aid of the child. The child lay in the street for several minutes before a car was able to get through to take him to the hospital. Initially Israel's Hadassah Ein Karem hospital refused to treat the boy; finally he was admitted in a state near brain-death. Ali's father said his son's organs would be donated to save another child—Palestinian or Jewish. The Israeli army denied using live ammunition. (*Reuters*)

• • •

Delegates of South Central Conference of the Mennonite Church received materials during the week of Nov. 13 regarding a vote on the status of Rainbow Mennonite Church of Kansas City, Kan. Rainbow, also affiliated with Western District of the General Conference Mennonite Church, is in conflict with SCC because of Rainbow's willingness to accept gay or lesbian people in monogamous, committed relationships as members. The decision to ask for a vote by mail-in ballot was mutual between Rainbow and SCC. The ballot includes two options, to expel the congregation or place it on "restricted," nonvoting status. Rainbow had requested a third option, to remain full members "under censure," but the SCC executive committee chose not to include this on the ballot. However, it can be found in the printed material from Rainbow included with the ballots. In addition, delegates are invited to write in their own option if they cannot affirm either one printed on the ballot. The ballots are to be mailed to SCC offices by March 1, 1998, in order to be counted and processed before the March executive committee meeting.

DEATHS

Annabelle Seumptewa Myron, Kykotsmovi, Ariz., died Oct. 22 at age 72. She was the mother of Elmer Myron and a long-time worker at Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, where a memorial fund has begun in her name.

Richard F. Pannabecker, professor emeritus of biology at Bluffton (Ohio) College, died Oct. 24 at age 75. He taught at Bluffton for 32 years and was a member of First Church in Bluffton.

Daniel Quimayousie died Nov. 6 at age 71. Daniel was ordained May 17 (see Sept. 9 issue, page 18) after being in ministry for 26 years. He was pastor at Hotevilla (Ariz.) Gospel Church.

MINISTERS

Tig Intagliata was installed as associate pastor at Trinity Church, Glendale, Ariz., Nov. 23.

Tim Kliewer is interim pastor at West Zion Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Craig Morton is interim pastor at Bethel Church, Inman, Kan.

Jo-Anne Nickel was installed Oct. 26 as associate pastor at Mount Royal Church, Saskatoon.

Meg O'Brien is pastoral intern at Pasadena (Calif.) Church.

Len Redding was installed as co-pastor of Prescott (Ariz.) Church on June 8.

Carol Rose is pastor at Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita, Kan.

Muriel Stackley was ordained Nov. 30 as pastor at Bergthal Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan.

Mike Stutzman was licensed and installed as associate pastor at Sunnyslope Church, Phoenix, Sept. 7.

Mathew Swora resigned as pastor at First Church, McPherson, Kan., effective in late winter. He will be pastor at Emmanuel Church, St. Paul, Minn.

Russ Toews was licensed and installed May 25 as pastor at Bacavi (Ariz.) Mennonite/Baptist Church.

Daniel Troyer was installed as co-pastor at Prescott (Ariz.) Church on June 8.

James Wenger is ending as pastor at Mennonite Community Church, Fresno, Calif., and will be pastor at North Baltimore Mennonite Church beginning in January 1998.

David Whitermore is transition pastor at Good Shepherd Church, Phoenix.

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Silver Lake Mennonite Camp (Ontario) invites applications for the position of **director**. Responsibilities include supervision and direction of the children's summer camp program; hiring, training and supervising a staff of approximately 40, and constituency relations/ fund-raising. The position is 3/4-time (full-time for nine months of the year). The successful applicant will demonstrate a love of children, have proven administrative and leadership skills, work comfortably with young adults and be able to articulate her or his faith in word and action. A post-secondary degree, preferably in religious studies, education or psychology, is an asset. Silver Lake is an accredited member of the Ontario Camping Association and the Mennonite Camping Association. More information about us is available online at **www.imagitek.com/silverlake**.

Please send a letter of application, a resume and the names of three references to **Ed Janzen, Chair, c/o Grace Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, ON, L2M 3R4**. Questions may also be directed to Ed Janzen at (905) 935-6112 (O), or (905) 685-3458 (H). Application deadline is **Dec. 15**.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open: **Spanish instructor** (80 percent time with benefits). Position begins Jan. 1, 1998.

Send resumes or inquiries to **Ronald L. Hertzler, Acting Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398**.

Flatrock Mennonite Church, an established rural congregation located in Flatrock, B.C., 30 miles east of Fort St. John, is seeking a **pastor**. Position open immediately.

Send resume to **Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Brad Giesbrecht, Box 179, Cecil Lake, BC V0C 1G0; (250) 781-3580**.

Construction/maintenance person skilled in multiple building trades needed at **Spruce Lake Retreat** in northeast Pennsylvania. Year-round, salaried position.

Call or send resume to **Dick Walter, Spruce Lake Retreat, R.R. 1 Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; (717) 595-7505**; fax **(717) 595-0328**.

Every day, Amani Jouda weighs malnourished babies. She is the only nutritionist among the 1 million Palestinians of the Gaza Strip. Health workers there watch Gazans' diets worsen due to Gaza's political problems and 50 percent unemployment.

"Some families don't have enough money to buy food. Some mothers don't know what to feed an infant or introduce solid foods too early," says Amani.

An MCC scholarship helped Amani receive a master's degree. Now, in addition to watching infants' weights, this MCC partner is working with the Palestinian Ministry of Health to create a national nutrition plan.

Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

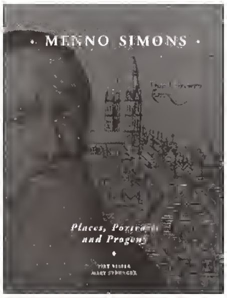
Reviews

BOOKS

MANY FACES OF MENNO

Menno Simons—Places, Portraits and Progeny *by Piet Visser and Mary Sprunger (Friesens, distributed in the United States by Masthof Press, 1996, 168 pages, $45 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor



Released last year to mark the "Menno Simons 500"—not a car race but rather the 500th anniversary of the birth of the man from whom Mennonites took their name—this book makes an attractive addition to *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, surely a staple on every Mennonite bookshelf.

Well, maybe not. So perhaps you can assuage your guilt with this book. Part I is made up of brief sketches, accompanied by etchings, photographs and reproductions of pages from Menno's writings along with quotes from the same, that outline the life and ministry of the former Catholic priest-turned-Anabaptist-on-the-run. This format, with its occasional interesting personal detail, makes Menno seem much more human, a complement to the bulky collection of his writings.

One of the book's most fascinating aspects is parts II and III, a collection of images of Menno—in linocuts, prints, engravings, sketches, paintings, even a few sculptures and cartoons/caricatures. Dates range from 1607 (Menno died in 1561) up until 1996. Probably the most striking thing about the artwork is the variety seen in its subject. There was no consensus on what Menno looked like, aside from his having a beard.

This is a lovely book. If it seems a bit overburdened with images and words at times, it's that very excess that helps make Menno a multidimensional character. You won't get more than a brief overview of the complexity of Anabaptist history and theology here, and the book is, not surprisingly, from a Dutch perspective. But it still has an important place among Anabaptist/Mennonite histories, and its attention to "Menno in the arts" puts it in a new category.

Resources

- **God Is With Us: Rediscovering the Meaning of Christmas** by F. Thomas Trotter (Upper Room, 1997, $9.95 U.S.) has 25 reflections on the holiday and its religious significance.
- **Landmines: Overcoming a Lethal Legacy** is a 9-minute video outlining the problem and ways you can help eliminate landmines. Order free from Church World Service, 1-800-297-1516; (219) 264-3102; or http://www.ncccusa.org/cws.
- **MCC Gun Violence Packet** provides information on gun violence and gun control, with stories of experiences and action suggestions to reduce gun violence. The packet is available for $3 U.S. from MCC Washington Office, 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002.
- **Anabaptist Heritage Games** are designed to teach players about Anabaptist history. Game titles include "Persecution," "What 'n Where" on places and events, and "Bap" on beliefs and practices. For information contact MIJIM Enterprises, P.O. Box 34, Smoketown, PA 17576-0034; (717) 656-6885.

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Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open: **assistant to the director of business affairs** (full-time). Position requires strong business background. Administrative and computer literacy skills necessary.

Send resumes or inquiries to **Jeffrey A. Ambrose, Director of Business Affairs, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

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AN OPEN LETTER TO READERS OF *THE MENNONITE*

Dear Reader:

Change is in the air. Progress is being made in integrating the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church into a new, unified denomination. One of the earliest outcomes of the integration effort will be a new publication, *The Mennonite*, premiering on Feb. 17, 1998.

Even though the new magazine will bear a familiar name, the existing *The Mennonite*, as well as the Mennonite Church's *Gospel Herald*, will discontinue after our Jan. 27, 1998 issues.

As a current subscriber to *The Mennonite*, you will automatically begin receiving the new publication. We will send subscription renewal information on your regular renewal cycle. It's that easy!

Many of the features of the new *The Mennonite* will be familiar to you, and some will reflect clear enhancements. Perhaps the most noticeable change will be 48 issues per year, instead of our current 24. Best of all, subscription rates are only expected to rise slightly, later next year.

Over the next several weeks you'll be receiving more information about your new publication. It will tell you what we're doing to make the new The *Mennonite* a vital part of your Christian life. Watch for these details in your mail box and in the remaining issues of this magazine.

We don't take this change lightly. *The Mennonite* has enjoyed a 113-year tradition of serving the General Conference. Even though change is inevitable, we consider this a transition more than an ending. In name, as in purpose, the new *The Mennonite* builds on the past in order to extend its ministry into the next century.

Thank you for your ongoing interest, prayers, and support.

Sincerely,

Gordon Houser

Gordon Houser
Editor

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Editorial

Where's Jesus?

When my children were younger they enjoyed looking through the pages of the *Where's Waldo?* books and finding the thin, glasses-wearing character in the red-and-white stocking cap hidden among a multitude of other characters. They always seemed able to find him faster than I could with my adult eyes. Perhaps I can learn from them as I look for Jesus today.

Jesus encourages his followers to see him in sharing the bread and cup (Matthew 26:26-28 and the other Gospels) and in those who are hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick or in prison (Matthew 25:31-45). We are to treat others as we would treat Jesus.

The church has argued over the centuries about just how to understand these passages. Is Jesus really present in the bread and cup? Or are they merely symbols of Jesus' presence? (I don't like that word "merely" there. Symbols include a powerful reality.) Either way we are called to a new way of seeing. We are to use our imaginations in order to see Jesus when we participate in the Eucharist or when we encounter the poor.

> *Let's ask God to open our eyes to see Jesus in our world, to see him in the many and varied people we encounter, people we might normally ignore or look down on.*

An often-told story goes like this: A monastery had lost its fervor. The monks had become less loving toward one another. One day the abbot, concerned about the disunity in the monastery, visited a respected rabbi nearby. The wise rabbi told him, "The Messiah is among you." When the abbot returned, the other monks wanted to know what the rabbi said. "He said that one of us is the Messiah," the abbot replied. From that time on the monks began treating one another with a loving care they had not experienced before. Soon the spiritual life of the monastery was thriving.

Seeing Jesus in others has a powerful effect. Look at the life of Mother Teresa. The vision that impelled her caring for the dying on the streets of Calcutta was that each person she cared for was Jesus. We can argue about whether or not that is literally true, but that misses the point. We are to see Jesus as present in our world and act accordingly.

Sometimes this is clearer to us than at other times. Last month a woman who has been attending my congregation for the past year decided to become a member formally. Our custom is to have anyone who is joining the church tell their spiritual pilgrimage at a Wednesday night meeting. Without exception this is special because each person's story reveals the grace of God at work.

Prophetic fire: The other night this woman shared her story. She spoke about being born a "blue baby" and that as a result of not getting enough oxygen during the birth she has had learning disabilities and suffers from mental illness. She said this without guile or embarrassment. Her face shone as she said that she knew God loves her. But she went on to talk about the prejudice she has experienced, about clerks in stores that talk about her within her hearing, calling her crazy. She spoke with a powerful, prophetic fire, saying that such behavior is wrong. It was not difficult for me to see Jesus in her. She said she liked to come to church to hear God's message. I told her that night that she was bringing God's message to us.

The stories in this issue (pages 3-8) illustrate seeing Jesus in others. Advent and Christmas mark a time of year we especially focus on what is called the Incarnation, God becoming flesh and living among us. Let's allow this focus to remain with us throughout the year. Let's ask God to open our eyes to see Jesus in our world, to see him in the many and varied people we encounter, people we might normally ignore or look down on.

Where's Jesus? All around us, beside us, within us. If we will only look. *Gordon Houser*

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

112: 24
DECEMBER 23, 1997

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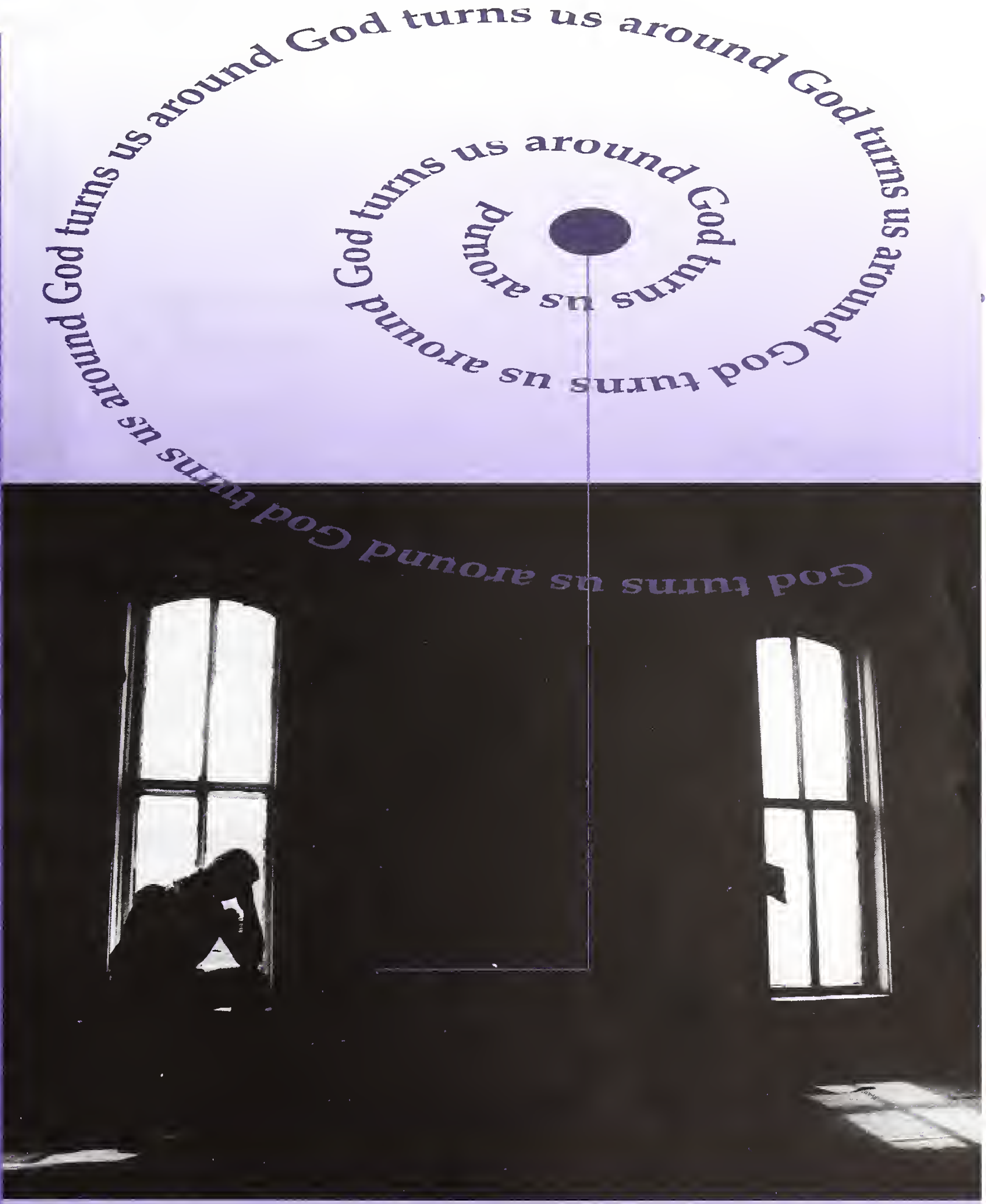
God turns us around God turns us around God turns us around God turns us around God turns us around God turns us around God turns us around God turns us around God turns us around

Prologue

The end of a calendar is often a time to reflect on our lives in the past year. As we look back, perhaps we should ask how God has led us in this year. Does God want us to change direction in any way? Should we make any changes?

These are difficult questions, yet if we are to grow, we must ask them. Let this issue be an encouragement to you as you read about others who have faced situations in which God calls them to change direction, to think and act in a different manner.

Eddy Hall describes his attempt to build a ministry to the poor (page 3). From the failure of this work and his study of the life of Moses he learned lessons about spiritual power and how it works.

David Morrow tells the story of his family's encounter with a soldier in El Salvador (page 6). This man was clearly an enemy. But what was David to do years later when he encountered this man as a fellow Christian who had repented of his past wrongs and needed help?

Dorothy Nickel Friesen offers a lighthearted look at a collection of individuals in an airport and how they "did church" together without realizing it (page 8).

J. Daryl Byler writes an open letter to President Clinton about Iraq (page 11), and Marianne Matthews encourages us to "walk quietly" (page 12).

Reflect as you read. *gh*

Next issue: Stories of women of faith

Cover: Photo by Vada Snider

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When 100 percent is not enough

The story of Moses provides a lesson about spiritual power, and Paul echoes it: 'When I am weak, then I am strong.'

Eddy Hall

On Aug. 3, 1981, two families who had just left Ohio a thousand miles behind joined our family in Oklahoma City to help launch a ministry to the poor. That day marked the beginning of the fulfillment of a God-given dream that for nine years, since the vision had first begun to take shape, had been the passion of my life.

During our first year together, the three families bought homes in the multiethnic neighborhood we had chosen for our work, all within two blocks of each other. By our second year, two more families had joined us. Several small ministry programs were up and running, and we were providing two staff members for a neighborhood shelter for homeless families.

As the administrator for Community of the Servant, I loved getting to know neighborhood people and responding to their needs. I loved planning with other community members and trying to build community. I loved speaking in churches, describing our work, challenging people to a more active concern for the poor.

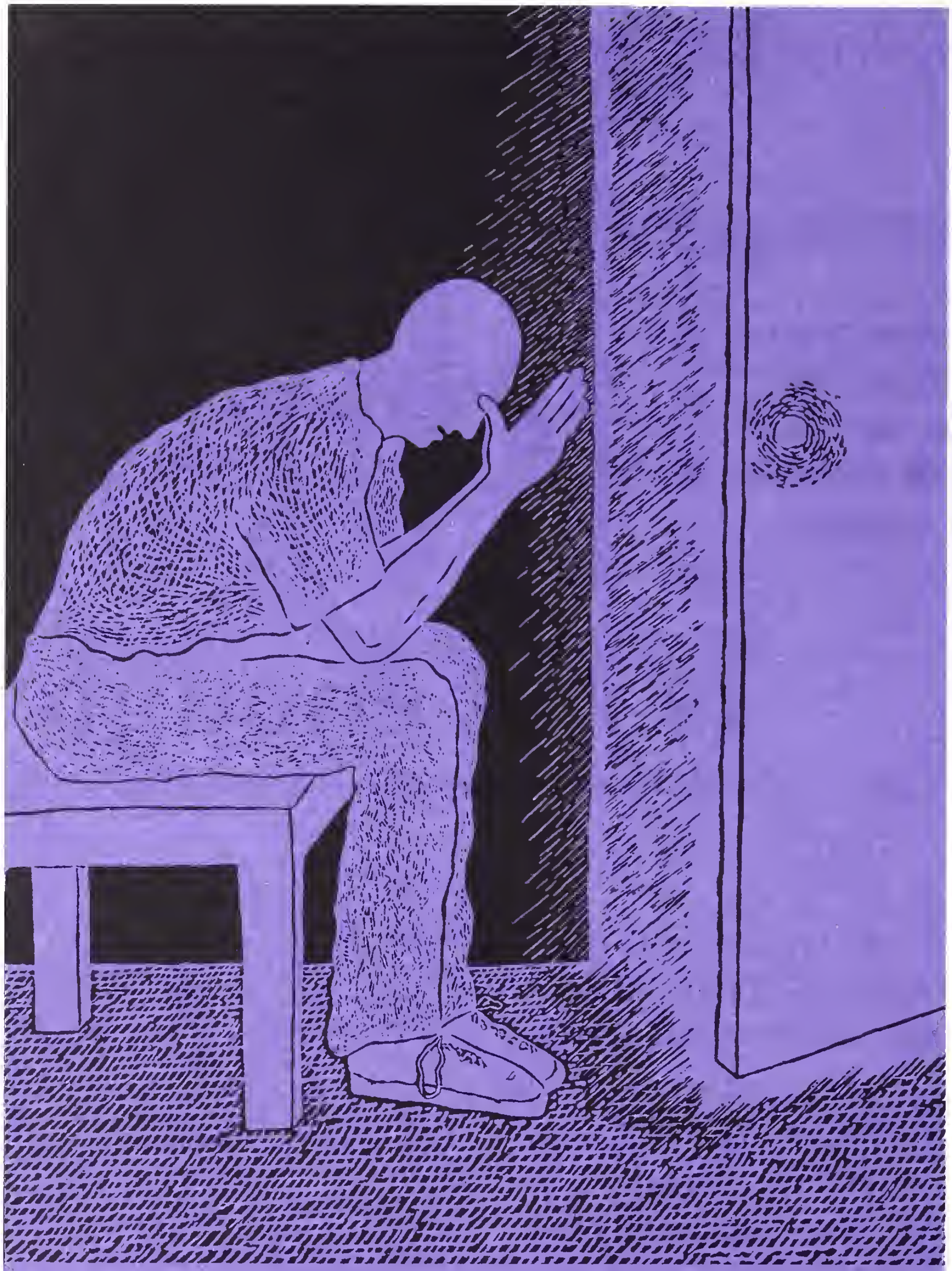
I lived through those days intensely grateful for the privilege of doing such satisfying work. After nine years of waiting, I was finally fulfilling the calling for which God had prepared me.

But from time to time my joy was tempered by a nagging problem. I knew that for the ministry to be all God wanted it to be, God had to be in control, guiding our decisions, providing the power to change people's lives. And I knew that for God consistently to guide me, I needed to take time regularly to seek God's guidance. So I decided to set aside time each morning to be alone with God to present my own needs and those of community members and neighborhood people and to seek guidance for my day's activities. At least that was my plan.

Occasionally I actually pulled it off, but more often I plunged into the work I loved with little more than a perfunctory nod in God's direction. What needed to be done seemed so clear and so urgent that I felt little need to consult God first. I said I needed God's direction, but my actions revealed that I felt I could run the ministry by my own wits, energy and willpower.

This gap between belief and action bothered me, so I began asking God to free me of my illusion that I was capable of directing the work myself, to help me feel as powerless to make our plans succeed on my own as I believed I was. For almost two years I prayed that prayer yet saw no answer.

The death of a dream: Then on Oct. 19, 1983, Kim and Becky, one of the original couples in the community and both on ministry staff, came into my office and announced, "We're leaving the Community of the Servant." Two weeks later another couple left. A third family became inactive. The



Artwork by Lora Jost

I said I needed God's direction, but my actions revealed that I felt I could run the ministry by my own wits, energy and willpower.

Community of the Servant was dead.

I had given it my best. It had looked to me—and to the churches and individuals backing us—like the ministry was making impressive progress. But now I faced the question, What do you do when 100 percent is not enough, when you have given everything and your life's calling lies in shambles at your feet?

As I considered that question, the pain of failure opened me to God's Spirit. I saw how specific mistakes I had made had contributed to collapse: failing to articulate clearly the original vision, insensitivity in decision making, spending my time administering programs rather than initiating pastoral care to neighborhood people as God had called me to do.

But the underlying reason for our failure, God showed me, was that I had too often relied on my own strength. Through the ministry's death, God had answered my prayer. This confidence-shattering failure had left me broken, accomplishing what two years of good intentions had not: For the first time I felt powerless to minister.

Moses, broken man: In my search for what to do next, I turned to the story of Moses. Years before, Moses had inspired me as an example of relocation—identifying with and living among those you seek to serve. He had given up the educational opportunity, political privilege and the wealth of Pharaoh's court, choosing instead to suffer with his people (see Hebrews 11:24-26). In my decision to relocate to the inner city to minister I had identified with Moses.

Moses had watched his people suffer, longing for the day when he could strike a blow for justice. When he saw an Egyptian cruelly beat a Hebrew, Moses saw an opportunity. He killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. That night Moses must have looked back over the day's events satisfied. He had taken his first small step toward liberating his people. Perhaps the next day he would take his second.

The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked one of them, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?"

One said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you did the Egyptian?" (Exodus 2:13-14 NIV).

His crime discovered, Moses fled Egypt for his life. In the 40 years that followed, the question must have returned to haunt Moses a thousand times: "Who made you ruler and judge over us?" Little could Moses' questioner have dreamed what a world-shattering question that was for Moses. Had he only been imagining all these years that God had a special mission for him? His miraculous protection at birth, his opportunity for education, his strong desire to help his people—surely these meant something. What had gone wrong? Moses' Hebrew brother gave voice to Moses' most profound self-doubt, and to his question Moses had no answer.

To become dependable channels of God's power requires learning two spiritual realities: our powerlessness and God's power.

Every day for the next 40 years Moses lived with the question, What do you do when you have given all to fulfill a mission, when you have spared nothing—and still you fail? What do you do when 100 percent is not enough?

While watching sheep, Moses likely spent thousands of hours agonizing over his brothers and sisters enslaved in Egypt, but whenever he tried to translate his concern into a plan of action, he always wound up at the same place: He was powerless to do anything about it. So shattered was Moses' self-confidence that he may have despaired of ever being used by God. The lesson God wanted to burn into Moses' soul was unavoidable: Moses was not equal to the task.

I identified with Moses' failure and the brokenness it produced. But God wasn't through with Moses, and in that I found hope.

Moses, Spirit-empowered man: Out of a burning bush, God spoke, "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:10-11 NIV).

This was not the Moses of 40 years earlier. His earlier eagerness had turned to reluctance. Moses had learned, not just in his head, but deep in his soul, that he was inadequate to the task God was calling him to do. So Moses said, "God, I can't do it. I'm not adequate."

God's response was, "You're right, Moses. In fact, the reason I can trust you with this assignment is because you know you can't do it. You're not adequate—but I AM."

At the burning bush God began to teach Moses that God's power can work most fully through those who are most convinced of their own powerlessness. God was able to bring deliverance through Moses only because Moses was absolutely certain he alone could not save his people.

Moses accepted God's call and went on to confront Pharaoh, free his people from bondage, and lead them through the Red Sea and into 40 years of miraculous sustenance in the wilderness. The mission Moses had tried and failed to accomplish in his own strength, he fulfilled by God's power.

Resurrection of the dream: As I prayed for guidance, I felt that God was giving me a similar call to start again. Because of the people we had lost, success now seemed far less likely. But I felt God was promising that the ministry would be rebuilt "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6 NIV).

In the years that followed, God resurrected the community. New people joined. Peace replaced the former discord, and those of us who had come through the community's painful collapse enjoyed a time of healing. The focus of my ministry, in keeping with my call, changed from administration to pastoral care. It seemed to me that God was using me to touch people's needs more than ever before. And when the time did come for our community to disband, it was not because of broken relationships. In fact, relationships were at their all-time best. It was because God was calling those in leadership to move on.

Why the difference? Where before I had struggled unsuccessfully to discipline myself to seek God's guidance, during those post-resurrection years I felt such a deep need for God's daily intervention that it was easy to start most days with time alone with God. I had learned, not just in my head but in my soul, that without God's daily guidance and power, I would fail.

A choice: I never would have asked for brokenness, but when it came I thanked God for it. Through it my prayer that I would feel my need to rely daily not on my own strength but on God was answered.

But brokenness alone doesn't guarantee Spirit-empowered living and ministry. It simply offers the opportunity. It's the open doorway. To enter that doorway requires a choice.

Brokenness—the destruction of confidence in self-sufficiency—leaves us with two options. The first is despair. We can quit hoping, give up on life, either by committing actual suicide or becoming one of the living dead.

The second option is dependence, falling into the hands of a waiting God. Paul knew what it was to find himself unequal to life's demands: "We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure. ... Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death." But Paul saw God at work in his suffering: "This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:8-9 NIV). Not equal to the demands confronting him, Paul faced a choice: despair or dependence. Out of his brokenness, Paul chose—and learned—dependence.

To become dependable channels of God's power requires learning two spiritual realities. The first is our powerlessness: "By myself I can do nothing" (John 5:30 NIV). The second is God's power: "I can do everything through [Christ] who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13 NIV). When we embrace our powerlessness and throw ourselves in dependence on God's power, only then can we experience for ourselves the great paradox Paul (2 Corinthians 12:10 NIV) discovered: "When I am weak, then I am strong."

Eddy Hall, who lives in Goessel, Kan., is a church planning consultant and serves as co-pastor of the recently planted Church of the Good Shepherd, a Mennonite cell church.

My enemy became my friend

There are many biblical reasons to love my enemy, but perhaps the most simple is that my enemy today may one day be my brother.

David Morrow

Many years ago, while pastoring a Presbyterian church in Arkansas, I led a Bible study on Matthew's injunction to love our enemies. I began by asking, "Who are your enemies?" No response. No one seemed to have any. I pressed them further. Were they not being honest about their feelings? Then I asked myself the same question. Who are my enemies? I couldn't think of anyone either. I was a nice guy. Everyone liked me. I didn't have any enemies.

Then I went to El Salvador, a country at war where enemies seemed to abound. Most of the war's victims were civilians whom the army had labeled "enemies."

Before beginning our Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in El Salvador, Irene (my wife) and I read about the army's treatment of "enemies." We knew their record of torture, assassination and massacre. We decided who our enemy would be. Our enemy would be the army.

While we never suffered the army's repression as did our Salvadoran neighbors, we did experience irritation and minor abuse. The day we moved into our home in the little town of Sesori, we found a platoon of soldiers in our backyard. Throughout our four years there, soldiers were in and around our house. At night they'd lie outside singing, swearing and smoking marijuana—a gang of stoned teenagers with automatic weapons, camped on our doorstep.

The enemy takes us for guerrillas: For their part, the army was understandably suspicious of us. What were a couple of gringos with a baby doing in the middle of a war zone? We could only be guerrillas or guerrilla sympathizers, so they repeatedly stopped and questioned us. Occasionally they came to our house to investigate.

One afternoon when Irene and baby Nathan were alone in the house, a knock came. It was a sergeant and a private, sent by their colonel. They asked the usual: Who are you? For whom do you work? Do you ever go into the countryside? Irene replied in the cool, brusque manner with which we usually addressed soldiers.

Then Nathan awakened from his nap. "!Que chulo!" (How cute!) the soldiers said. No more questions. They spent the rest of their visit oohing and aahing over Nathan, a common reaction but not one Irene expected from soldiers. She didn't expect the normal human response to a baby from them. And quite frankly, it irritated her.

Their reaction contradicted her image of soldiers as brutes incapable of warmth, affection, tenderness. The prime strategy in war is to dehumanize the enemy—and that is what both she and I had done. Theologically we were pacifists, but psychologically we had become participants in war.

El Salvador was still at war when we returned to the United States in 1990. We had grown personally and spiritually and had learned much from Salvadoran Christians about faith amid suffering. But the war had left within us a residue of anger and bitterness—anger at the violence and injustice, and bitterness toward those who perpetrated it.

The enemy asks a favor: We began working with refugees in Harlingen, Texas, a Mennonite Board of Missions assignment. One Sunday we were invited to give a presentation on El Salvador at Iglesia Menonita del Cordero, the Mennonite church in Brownsville, Texas.

After the service a friend introduced Irene to a Salvadoran man. Irene greeted him warmly and explained where we had lived in El Salvador.

"I know," he said. "I remember you. You lived in the house next to the Baptist church. You had a cute little boy you'd push around town in a little wooden cart. I was a sergeant in the army. I came to your house one day."

This was the soldier who had cooed over Nathan some four years earlier, the soldier we had dismissed as our enemy—and God's. His name, which Irene hadn't bothered to find out that

Theologically we were pacifists, but psychologically we had become participants in war.

afternoon, was Doroteo.

That evening Doroteo phoned. His political asylum hearing was coming up. Could I translate for him?

"Can't someone else do it?" I asked. No, no one else could.

"I really can't translate for you without first hearing your story," I said. He would be happy to meet with me. He would come the next day.

I didn't want him in our house. I felt like Ananias when the Lord told him to go and meet Saul after Saul had been blinded. No, Lord. I know this man's past. He's a man of violence.

Doroteo had been a man of violence. His battalion had a horrible record of atrocities. Our neighbor's husband in Sesori had been murdered by members of this battalion, his body dumped down a well. Doroteo was my enemy.

The enemy shares his story: The next morning I greeted Doroteo a little more warmly than Irene had in Sesori. He sat down and related his story.

He had joined the military in 1980 and became a member of one of the elite special forces battalions trained by the U.S. military. Whenever his battalion was in the Sesori area, Doroteo's job was to spy on us. He staked out our house and watched our movements.

Doroteo had come to our home twice. By his second visit he was convinced we were affiliated with the guerrillas, and he reported this to his commander. After learning Irene was a nurse, Doroteo presumed we were health workers supporting a clinic that treated wounded guerrillas. Actually, Irene trained church health promoters and worked in a small rural pharmacy.

In 1989, Doroteo was critically wounded in a battle right outside our town. During his months of convalescence he decided to get out of the army. He asked three times to be relieved of his duties; three times he was denied. Clearly his superiors didn't want him to leave the army—alive. He knew too much.

Doroteo feared that when he returned to the battlefield, the army would find a way for him to be killed. So he deserted. Not out of Christian conviction; Doroteo was not a Christian. Besides the violence in which he had taken part, Doroteo had lived a life of drugs, alcohol and carousing.

Yet within him was a desire to change, a recognition that only God could do the changing. So he left El Salvador with the hope of finding both safety and conversion.

After a six-month journey through Mexico, he crossed the Rio Grande into Brownsville, where he met Irma and Juan Arambaru of the Mennonite church there. They invited him to services. He stopped drinking and doing drugs and committed his life to Christ. He even experienced a call to the ministry.

The enemy is baptized: Something about Doroteo's story, something about his humble manner, rang true. Not only did I agree to translate for his asylum hearing, but Irene and I also visited with him at church. We attended his baptism—in January's icy waters on the Gulf of Mexico.

About that time I decided to search for a pastorate in the Mennonite church. As a Presbyterian I had never received believer's baptism, so I asked our pastor to baptize me. He did so, at the same beach where Doroteo had been baptized six months earlier. My own rebirth in Christ had occurred 15 years earlier. Yet as I rose out of the baptismal waters I felt I had new life, a new opportunity for something.

Later that year we moved to Warden, Wash., where I had accepted a call to pastor a Mennonite church. About the same time, Doroteo moved to Newton, Kan., to study at the Anabaptist Biblical Institute. We kept in touch and

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Irene Morrow (MCC)

Like Ananias and Saul: *David Morrow (left) and Doroteo Rivera in front of their shared congregational home*

God keeps sending the enemy to our house until we learn to love him.

several times Doroteo said he might like to move to Washington. We doubted he would ever do so.

Then last summer, the phone rang early one Sunday morning. It was Doroteo, calling from a pay phone six blocks away. He had decided to move to Washington and asked if he could stay with us for a while.

Over the following days Irene and I spent hours with Doroteo, reminiscing about El Salvador and hearing more of his story. Those conversations helped Irene find healing for much of the residual bitterness from our years in El Salvador. And I began to understand the new opportunity God had given me at my baptism.

The enemy becomes friend and colleague: It was an opportunity to love my enemies as God loved me. As Irene put it, "God has sent the enemy to our house." God sent him to our house in El Salvador, God sent him to our house in Texas, God sent him to our house here in Washington. God keeps sending the enemy to our house until we learn to love him.

A year has passed, and Doroteo still lives with us. He started a Hispanic congregation at our church.

I still feel like Ananias. But now I feel like Ananias when he met Saul for the first time—and greeted him with the words, "Brother Saul." Ananias had learned what I now have learned. There are many biblical reasons to love my enemy, but perhaps the most simple is that my enemy today may one day be my brother.

David and Irene Morrow served in El Salvador with Mennonite Central Committee from 1986 to 1990. Two sons, Nathan and Joel, were born there, and they are in the process of adopting Andrew, age 1. David now pastors Warden (Wash.) Mennonite Church, and Irene is a family nurse practitioner at a migrant health center. Doroteo Rivera pastors Mision Evangelica Manantiales de Vida Eterna, also in Warden.

A liturgy in the airport

Grandmother, Cruise Couple, Weeping Woman, Business Man and others form an impromptu congregation.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen

Gathering

I was able to survey three rows of passengers awaiting our short flight from Chicago to Fort Wayne, Ind. With plenty of time on my hands I decided, after reading someone else's newspaper, simply to watch people.

To my left, a family of three spoke quietly in Spanish to each other, checking their watches repeatedly. Soon an airline attendant wheeled another passenger, an elderly woman, to the single vacant seat beside the husband of the family. She took her place in the row of four. They greeted each other politely and fell silent. Finally the conversation began, and I overheard the introductory words. He said the reason for the family's trip was a wedding. His anxiety was growing because the flight's delay meant they might miss the wedding altogether.

Praising

The friendly grandmother remarked that weddings were important times, and Husband said, "Families are the most important thing."

Grandmother quickly added, "Well, next to Jesus Christ, of course."

Husband smiled and turned to Grandmother, saying, "I agree." In heavily accented English he noted that they were Catholics, and Jesus Christ certainly was the reason for families.

(Hey, I'm a pastor, I thought. Would you like to discuss religion? Your faith? I have lots of experience with these matters. But I remained silent.)

Grandmother hesitated, then said, "Your people are Christians? I thought you said you were Catholics."

Proclaiming

Husband replied, "You got that right. That's why we're going to this wedding. We need to stand by our young people. We need to tell them that if they don't have faith and if they don't begin by being married in the church, well, they aren't getting in touch with the real power for their lives. We dropped everything just to go to this wedding."

Just then the announcer declared another delay. The

Our little congregation was together among 60 other passengers, almost in the same seating patterns as in the airport lounge.

family threw up their hands but smiled at each other, and Husband said, "Well, we'll still get there for the reception. But we're going."

Praying

Meanwhile a middle-aged woman, dressed in a business suit, stepped to the ticket counter, asking, "Another delay? When will we leave?" She was assured that the flight would leave within 30 minutes. She promptly turned to the row to my right and sat down. Her cell phone came out of her purse and she started dialing. Simultaneously she reached for a handful of tissues, dabbing her eyes. Her call was not answered. The tears continued. Weeping Woman took off her glasses, wiped her face and sighed.

Next to Weeping Woman was another couple, loaded with packages from their cruise. Complete with straw hat, posters and flower shirts, they were the picture of returning vacationers. "I can't believe it. We traveled for three weeks, connected with planes, buses, ships and never missed a connection. Now we have one last hour to fly and we are delayed for the third time," Cruise Husband declared to Weeping Woman.

Weeping Woman could not hide. She said, "And I just have to get to Fort Wayne. My father just had a heart attack—he's in the hospital, and—" her voice trailed off. She removed glasses once more, and the tissues covered her eyes.

(Hey, I'm a pastor, I thought. I've dealt with emergencies, death and such. I'll help. But I remained silent.).

Business Man, with attache case and computer bag, sat in the middle row, with his back to Weeping Woman. He turned to Cruise Couple and Weeping Woman and said, "I've flown this route a hundred times. This is Saturday night, and we're low priority. Just hope the plane even flies."

A collective groan from Hispanic Family, Grandmother, Cruise Couple, Weeping Woman filled our small waiting area. We all exchanged knowing glances, checked our watches and fell silent.

Again Weeping Woman took out her cell phone and could not make connections. Again we noticed her sorrow. She said, "I have to get to the hospital. I just have to." Her voice was soft, pleading, full of pain. "If I can't reach anybody, I'll just take a cab and get to the hospital as fast as I can. I'm sure everyone is already at the hospital anyway. At least I hope someone is there."

Offering

Business Man again turned around and said, "Ma'am, I'm from Fort Wayne, and it might be tough to get a cab quickly. I'm driving right by the hospital on my way home and I'd be glad to drop you off. It's really not out of my way."

Weeping Woman, dazed, said, "Thanks, but I'm sure my family will get me ... maybe," and fell silent.

Later, after two more delays, we boarded our flight, and it turned out I was seated next to Business Man, that Grandmother and Hispanic Husband were next to each other and that Weeping Woman and Cruise Couple were in the same row. Our little congregation was together among 60 other passengers, almost in the same seating patterns as in the airport lounge.

Witnessing

We fell silent, drinking our sodas and chewing our pretzels. As the plane finally landed and we prepared for departure, we stood together in the aisle waiting for the doors to open. Business Man turned to Weeping Woman four rows away and again said, "I'll be off the plane before you. I will go to the parking lot, get my car and pull up to the curb. If you want a ride, meet me at the baggage claim curb. It's really not out of my way. I'd be happy to give you a ride."

Weeping Woman, looking tired, weakly smiled at the stranger. "Thank you. You are very kind."

Sending

I managed a quiet "amen," which Business Man acknowledged with a slight smile.

(Hey, I'm a pastor. At least I could give the benediction.)

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is pastor at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

Letters

PRACTICE PEACEMAKING

It feels as if Mennonites are fighting the "gulf war" and the gulf is growing ever wider. Isn't it time we practice what we preach—peacemaking—in our churches?

We seem to know how to discard people. We've been doing it for years. We have often painfully pushed pastors out, people have been summarily dismissed from jobs in conference and other Mennonite institutions, we've shunned those who were divorced or had a child out of wedlock. And now a Mennonite conference has expelled an entire congregation—with others likely to be expelled soon. (See "Franconia Expels Germantown," Oct. 28 issue, page 13.)

Isn't there a better way to deal with conflict? Where are the Christian peacemaker teams to help us? Where are the mediators who will help us respect each other's differences? Can we learn to see Jesus Christ in each other, or will fear, mistrust and anger rule?

When the Christian peacemaker teams come, I want to be the first in line to learn peace and reconciliation skills. I know how to be angry and spout off (and feel bad later). I know how to walk away from conflict (but it never leaves). So I need to learn those skills. Couldn't we all learn to be more compassionate and loving?

God, we need you to heal our brokenness. We need you, O God, to send your Spirit of peace and love among us. Kyrie eleison! *Ruth Linscheid, North Newton, Kan.*

OFFENSIVE AND UNACCEPTABLE

I am greatly saddened to hear of the expulsion of Germantown Mennonite Church from the Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church (see Oct. 28 issue, page 13). I grew up in this conference and still know many of its constituents. I joined a General Conference congregation during my college days, but still consider the lessons learned in Franconia the foundation of my faith.

The intolerance shown to Germantown by their brothers and sisters is amazing, but most incredible is the way the decision was made. A mail-in ballot? Was this convenience or cowardice? Either way, I find it offensive and unacceptable. Jesus' example leads us to love, not to judge. If the congregation has processed this matter together with study and prayer, then the conference should trust God's leading. Those that oppose the congregation's decision should at least have the courage to talk directly to the brothers and sisters they are "releasing"—a euphemism for kicking them out.

Thank you, pastor Richard Lichty. You showed me in high school that you were a man of God, and you still are. I pray for you and the Germantown congregation. There are many who love and accept you. *Arlene Hinckle Steffen, Fresno, Calif.*

ATTACK CORE OF PROBLEM

In the article "Tainted Thanks" (Nov. 25 issue, page 3), Dave Schrock-Shenk writes about the low cost of sugar and the effect this has on sugar workers and their families in the Philippines. He also writes, "Our wages are high largely because wealth has flowed into this country from around the world for centuries."

I suppose reasonable people with similar goals and motives can disagree, and I do disagree with this. I believe that the reason our wages are so much higher is due to the fact that we have much higher productivity, and the reason their wages are so much lower is that they have much lower productivity. Further, sugar in this country is expensive rather than inexpensive by world price standards. This is so because we impose quotas on sugar which keeps foreign producers from selling as much as they want here. The nonquota amounts have to be "dumped" on the world market to the detriment of Third-World producers and workers. So our hands may not be clean, but it's not because we buy "cheap sugar." Likewise, we disagree over the cause of low wages. Yes, we buy foreign goods from many countries at prices lower than we can produce them, but they also buy goods from us at prices much lower than they can produce them. In fact, I would argue that the only way for many small countries to escape their narrow resource base and rapidly increase living standards is to specialize and participate freely in world trade.

This doesn't mean we should be oblivious to the plight of the Filipino worker with low productivity. It does suggest, however, that the focus should be placed on helping with such things as education and access to capital—perhaps even increasing oft-

FROM OUR MISSION WORKERS

Mexico—The first time I saw Martin, I was shocked by his condition. Stomach cancer had been misdiagnosed as cirrhosis of the liver because of his heavy drinking. By the time it was correctly diagnosed, in September, the doctors sent him home to die.

When we visited him, he weighed about 90 pounds. And the tumor protruding from his stomach looked like a large cantaloupe. He politely listened to the gospel message but, because a lifetime of spiritism and religion had hardened his heart, he wasn't ready to repent and receive the Good News. The church prayed.

One week later a sister received a word while praying: We should return and Martin would not only be receptive to the gospel, but I would baptize him.

I took her with me to visit Martin the next day. Within minutes he was in tears, and later, as I shared Mark 16, he requested water baptism. As I was baptizing Martin, his wife asked if she, too, could follow Jesus. We led her to the feet of the Master and dunked her in the big tub before the water cooled off.

Rosa, who had the prophetic word, then confronted Martin about his need to ask forgiveness of his wife. He broke down, and by the time we left, many tears had been shed and many sins covered.

The next Sunday, Martin's wife and three children were all at the worship service, hungry to learn more. Join us in praying for Martin's physical healing. *Bob and Bonnie Stevenson* vilified "foreign aid." We cannot attack the symptom (low wages) directly and should not attack part of the solution (free trade). We ought to attack the core of the problem. While we are at it we could consider removing the quotas on sugar, which hurt both American consumers and Third-World producers and workers. *Emil Kreider, Beloit, Wis.*

LIKES THEMATIC APPROACH

I just wanted to let you folks know how much I enjoy *The Mennonite*. I especially like the way you devote the bulk of each issue to one theme or topic. I enjoy the well-selected and interesting margin notes, too. *Gary Duell, Sunrise Mennonite Church, Portland*

SKIN COLOR NOT A DISABILITY

I'm responding to Denise Preller's article "Invisible People" (Oct. 28 issue, page 12).

I often read Preller's column because I find her insights on children helpful; however, this time she has made an inference that troubles me. The Oct. 28 column focuses on people who are disabled and how to engage children's curiosity about them. In her final paragraphs she relates an experience of her son engaging an African-American man for the first time. She uses this story to illustrate how "when your child embarrasses you with questions about a person with disabilities, take a deep breath."

Skin color and cultural heritage that are different from "white" are not disabilities. *Becky Hofkamp, North Newton, Kan.*

GIVE MORE MONEY TO CHURCH

Some time ago we were asked to write suggestions to J.B. Miller for the "Fiscal Health" column. I am always happy to see another column dealing with money matters.

We could use some encouragement to give more money to the church as tithes and offerings. My parents gave liberally to the work of the church around the world and I look to them as examples. But so much of what the media shoots at me is geared to saving for the retirement years, including the "Christian" organizations that manage our retirement funds. *Loren Entz, Orodara, Burkina Faso*

Speaking out

Before you bomb Baghdad

An open letter to U.S. President Bill Clinton

J. Daryl Byler

Thankfully, another military confrontation in the Persian Gulf has been averted—at least for the moment. Still, more American warships and bombers are joining the already large U.S. military presence in the region—poised for a massive show of force "if necessary."

There is no justification for President Saddam Hussein's acts of aggression against his neighboring countries. There is no defense for his policy of building palaces while thousands of Iraqi children starve. Nor is there any excuse for his apparent obsession with obtaining chemical or other weapons of mass destruction.

But as politicians and pundits prepare us for war, demanding military strikes and the overthrow of President Hussein, we would do well to consider why America seems to have lost any moral voice to address issues in the Gulf region. In this calm before the next desert storm, I urge you to consider the hypocrisy in U.S. policy that has created America's moral laryngitis.

> ***While seeking to protect U.S. oil interests in the region, the United States has been willing to sacrifice the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children.***

While seeking to protect U.S. oil interests in the region, the United States has been willing to sacrifice the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. According to UNICEF reports, more than 100 Iraqi children die daily from hunger and diseases spawned by seven years' worth of suffocating economic sanctions.

While trying to isolate President Hussein, the United States instead has increasingly isolated itself from the international community. When convenient, the United States seems ready to act alone in the international community to impose its will and policies on other countries.

While pressuring President Hussein to stop acting aggressively toward his neighbors, the United States is silent about the vast illegal expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

While calling for Iraq to cooperate with the international community, the United States steadfastly refuses to pay its full U.N. dues.

While calling for Iraq to give up weapons of mass destruction, the United States maintains the world's largest nuclear arsenal and refuses to sign the Ottawa Treaty that would ban the mass destruction caused by anti-personnel landmines.

What are we teaching our children about the proper role of government? Instead of preserving order (Romans 13:1-7), the U.S. government policy seems to promote disorder. Instead of sustaining life (Genesis 41:46-57), the U.S. policy seems to snuff out life. Instead of protecting the most vulnerable people (Matthew 25:31-46), the U.S. policy seems willing to expend them to achieve our political objectives. What God has intended as an instrument for good, we have turned into an implement of greed.

What might happen if you took literally Jesus' call to feed our enemies and encouraged a massive U.N.-led effort to provide food for starving Iraqi people? In addition to taking the high moral ground, it just might create domestic political pressure for President Hussein to change his ways.

While military strikes are popular in the short run—as former President Bush knows well—it is increasingly clear that further military action will only play into the hands of Saddam Hussein. More importantly, violence did not make the Gulf more secure in 1991 and it will not, indeed cannot, now.

Mr. President, before you bomb Baghdad, I implore you to think about these things.

Daryl Byler works in the Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office.

Commentary

Walk quietly

If God spoke in a whisper, would you hear?

Marianne Matthews

The question haunted me: If God spoke to you in a whisper, would you be quiet enough to hear it? A sign above a local self-serve gas pump challenged me, "Are you in a hurry? We'll help you go faster."

In contemporary society our adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry and crowds. Psychiatrist C. G. Jung once remarked, "Hurry is not of the devil; it is the devil" (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*).

Quietness has eluded me most of my life. I lived in a din of noise as I raced between activities. I attempted to fill the void, the inner vacuum, with busyness. Of course, it was for good purposes—for the church, for the Lord, for my family. I darted about in a hustle-bustle existence and called it ministry.

A.W. Tozer nailed me with this statement: "The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities that occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing of the heart" (A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*).

Quiet time. I wanted it and even knew how to get it, but I was too busy flying about and grabbing the next bite to eat on the way out the door so I wouldn't be late for the next meeting. Restlessness grew within me, but how could I fix it? By going and doing more. The need for quietness, for truly seeking God, lay buried under the turbulence of my frantic lifestyle.

The world C. S. Lewis describes in *The Screwtape Letters* in a conversation between Screwtape and his nephew, Wormwood, spoke of my world. "My dear Wormwood: Music and silence—how I detest them both! How thankful we should be that ever since our Father entered Hell, all has been occupied by Noise. We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction as regards the Earth."

The Great Deceiver drew me into his ruse. He delighted in disquieting me. More often than not, anxiety was my companion. Could I hear the rustle of leaves, the cooing of a dove, the sighing of a lonely heart, or the rustling waters in a nearby brook? Without an ear to hear this quietness, I struggled to hear God's still small voice. My daily lifestyle indicted me.

> ***They had gone too fast the first day and they were now waiting for their souls to catch up with their bodies.***

A reading in *Springs in the Valley* by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman pointed to the need within: "In the deep jungles of Africa, a traveler was making a long trek. Coolies had been engaged from a tribe to carry the loads. The first day they marched rapidly and went far. The traveler had high hopes of a speedy journey. But the second morning the jungle tribesmen refused to move. For some strange reason, they just sat and rested. On inquiry as to the reason for this strange behavior, the traveler was informed that they had gone too fast the first day and that they were now waiting for their souls to catch up with their bodies.

"This whirling, rushing life which so many of us live does for us what that first march did for those poor jungle tribesmen. The difference: They knew that they needed to restore life's balance; too often we do not."

I had much to learn from these African coolies. A day came in my life when The Arresting Officer stopped me cold in my tracks and changed my life. Although physically I was weakened, I've become strong in spirit because my life has become one of quietness. Now I hear God's voice and receive guidance and comfort.

It's easy to talk about, but how do we quiet the restlessness within and walk quietly?

- It takes discipline.
- Put a guard around that personal time as a cherished gift.
- Schedule time to be alone. It brings order into the rest of a day.
- Discern the important and omit things that bring stress.
- Teach the family how to have quiet time so they don't need to fill their world with noise and activity.
- Don't be afraid of unwanted memories coming in the quiet time. Take it to the Lord for healing.

Jesus often went into the mountains to be alone with God. If he needed this quiet time, how much more I need it.

Walking quietly has empowered my life. I've strength in my quietness that I've never had before. The longing of my heart is fulfilled as I walk quietly with the Lord.

Marianne Matthews lives in Tucson, Ariz.

Tahoma Peak*

Nadia Hazboun Reimer

Tangled roots cross the trail
like varicose veins on an aged,
arthritic leg. It is narrow and steep,
this trail, and burdened with me.
I am the pain that runs through
and is remembered for generations.

The prints of my heavy boots
are false passports between
hoof prints and trillium. The Indian
paintbrush blooms all summer
long on banks of steady chattering
streams. I am the generic,
nondescript color of nature.

Only when I reach the top
and look down at the dark
forest, do I realize
what it takes
to create one planet.

*Tahoma is the Native American name of Mt. Rainier, Wash.

Nadia Hazboun Reimer lives in Ritzville, Wash.

Two MVS workers arrested in protest

Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC/MBM)—On the eighth anniversary of the assassination of six priests and two women at a Jesuit university in El Salvador, two Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) workers were arrested for their role in protests outside the school that reportedly trained the killers.

MVS workers Andrea Siemens, serving in Dallas, Texas, and Wes Hare, serving in Richmond, Va., were among 601 protesters arrested Nov. 16 at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga., where the School of the Americas (SOA) is based. MVS is a joint program of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church.

The protesters were attempting to deliver hundreds of thousands of signatures calling for the closure of the SOA, which trains 900 to 2,000 soldiers from Latin America each year. The school's annual $20 million budget is funded by U.S. taxpayers.

> ***"I would like to think that anyone who claims to be an Anabaptist would act so that we don't have to protest and break the law again."***
>
> **Wes Hare**

The Fort Benning military police estimated the number of protesters at 1,000. The School of the Americas Watch, a watchdog group committed to closing down the school, published an estimate of 2,000.

Dubbed the "School of the Assassins" by critics, the SOA's graduates are said to have been trained in torture techniques, assassination tactics and other counter-insurgency planning during their tenure at the school. Notorious graduates of the school include former Panamanian president Gen. Manuel Noriega, now serving 40 years in a U.S. prison for drug trafficking, and Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson, who reportedly ordered the assassination of Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Hare and Siemens were among those who chose to cross a large white line on the road leading into the Army base, which put them in danger of being charged with criminal trespass in federal court. Siemens was a "pallbearer" for a mock coffin that contained the signatures protesters wanted to deliver to the school. This "funeral procession" consisted of eight coffins containing petitions to close the school, and hundreds of people carrying wooden crosses bearing the names of people killed in Latin America, allegedly by or on orders from graduates of the SOA.

Hare, a long-time peace activist who carried one of the wooden crosses, says that Mennonites in particular should be doing everything in their power to close down the SOA.

"I would like to think that anyone who claims to be an Anabaptist would act so that we don't have to protest and break the law again," he says. "When you are trying to be faithful to human values and the biblical mandate, you must act when injustice, torture and terror are being carried out. This is why we chose to cross the line into the base, even though we knew it was a violation of the law."

MVS local program coordinator Jane Hare, of Richmond, Va., attended the protest but decided not to cross the line leading into the base. Hare says that although she chose to stay within the bounds of the law, her presence at the protest was a witness.

"I was making a statement that I do not agree with a school that trains people to take others' lives," she says.

About 50 Mennonite college and high school students were also part of the Nov. 16 protest. Thirty students and two staff members from Goshen (Ind.) College, 13 students from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and six students from Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, traveled to Fort Benning for the event. Five of the EMU students were arrested for civil disobedience but were not charged. *Christy Risser with Rachel Lapp*

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Judy Schroeder Tomlonson, Warrensburg, Mo., died Dec. 3. Tomlonson suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease). She wrote about this in our April 8 issue, "Questions As I Prepare to Die" (page 3).

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Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., is offering a Seminary Sampler March 1-2, 1998. The event will include a hymn sing led by Mary K. Oyer, meals with students and faculty, a question and answer session, attending regular seminary classes and a chapel service. For information call Andrew Kreider at 1-800-964-2627 or (219) 293-7354, or e-mail admissions@ambs.edu.

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Constituency giving to Mennonite Central Committee in Canada has increased 59 percent since 1990, compensating for declining government grants to the organization over the past few years. In 1990, constituency giving to the MCCs in Canada totaled $8,090,000. By the end of MCC's 1997 fiscal year, it had risen to $12,860,000. This includes giving to the provincial and national MCC offices, and includes cash contributions directly to MCC or the MCC account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and income from relief sales and thrift shops. The largest growth in revenue is from constituents and thrift stores.

The fourth Women Doing Theology conference will be held June 25-27, 1998, on the campus of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. The conference is sponsored by the Women's Concerns Office of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. and Kansas Mennonite Women in Ministry. The theme is "Journey Toward Healing." For more information, contact Gwen Groff, MCC U.S. Women's Concerns Coordinator, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-3889; e-mail gmg@ mccus.org.

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"God don't like ugly" was a phrase African-American slaves used to give themselves hope for future. So said Dwight Hopkins, associate professor of theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School, at Bluffton (Ohio) College Oct. 21. Hopkins said that while slaves felt that evil might reign now, in the end God's will would prevail on earth for sufferers of pain and abuse. "God became the personification of justice," said Hopkins. "Black people anchored their faith in liberation." *Bluffton College*

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Hunger in Haiti is spreading in the countryside and into the city as the rains that normally come in April did not arrive in time to save the bean and corn crops. "Market women in downtown Port-au-Prince are now selling bricks of clay covered with a little sugar; people are eating the bricks to kill their hunger pain," writes Mennonite Central Committee Haiti co-director Dan Wiens. MCC provided $7,370 U.S./$10,350 Cdn. to purchase food locally and distribute it to people in danger of dying from starvation without such assistance. MCC currently has eight workers in Haiti doing rural work in agroforestry and health, serving with children's programs and supporting the development of Haitian organizations seeking solutions to their country's problems. *Emily Will*

Three into one

Dave Linscheid

Newton, Kan. (GCMC/MC/CMC)—Here and there, Mennonite "symbols" fade quietly into history as their two largest denominations, the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC), move toward merger. The latest of these are separate denominational directories.

GC staff based at 722 Main Street here marked the publication of the final *Handbook of Information* recently with a coffee given in honor of *Handbook* editor Doris Mendel Schmidt. She is pictured with handbooks dating from 1881, when the General Confer-ence published the first one, in German. English-language publi-cation started in 1898.

Schmidt began the part-time position as *Handbook* editor in late 1989. *Handbook of Information 1998*, which was released in October, was her eighth volume.

The GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada have already begun working together on an integrated handbook. Called *Mennonite Directory*, this new resource will be available starting in the fall of 1998 (dated 1999).

James E. Horsch, Scottdale, Pa., will serve as editor of the *Mennonite Directory*, with Schmidt and Aiden Schlichting Enns, Winnipeg, as associate editors.

Center bridges line of conflict in Northern Ireland

Belfast, Northern Ireland (GCMC/MBM)—Ten years ago, it could not have happened: Protestants and Catholics worshiping together under a single roof here in one of the most violent cities in Northern Ireland.

On Oct. 18, more than 230 people, Catholic and Protestant, attended the opening ceremony for the Springfield Road Methodist Church complex.

The church literally straddles the "peace line" wall that divides the city, segregating the Protestant and Catholic areas. The sanctuary is on one side of the line; the parsonage, where Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker Dave Moser lives, on the other.

MBM board of directors member Sally Schreiner, Evanston, Ill., who attended the opening, says the visual impact of the peace line is powerful.

"The wall is really like the Berlin Wall," she says. "Some parts of it are developed and built up, and other parts are covered with barbed wire and graffiti. Talk about being right in the eye of the storm."

Springfield Road Methodist Church has long held a position in the center of "the Troubles" in Belfast. Three times in the last five years, the church building has been intentionally set on fire. The most recent arson has occurred since Moser joined the pastoral staff, about a year ago.

Moser is supported by MBM and the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Moser was called to work with Springfield Road pastor Rev. Gary J. Mason, who had a vision of transforming the church building into more than just a sanctuary to be used on Sunday mornings. The fruits of that vision were grants to create the Forthspring Community Center, contained within the church complex.

Forthspring is operated by a board made up of representatives of the four agencies that came together to create the center. The Springfield Road church, Cornerstone Community, Currach Community and the Mid-

Springfield Community Association collaborate in running the center. Cornerstone and Currach are ecumenical communities. Mid-Springfield Community Association was started by mothers of two primary school children: one Catholic, one Protestant.

Anglican Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, the keynote speaker at the opening ceremony, told the gathered Catholics and Prot-estants that they have a unique opportunity. "Ireland has not followed the course of the secularization of the rest of Europe," said Newbigin, a well-known missions scholar. "You can model Jesus at this [Forthspring Community] center to bring about change. You must not use this power as a way of coercion, but as a means of reconciliation."

The Springfield Road celebration began Oct. 17 with an Irish "ceile," a dance party for the whole community. The youth hall at the back of the church building was packed with nearly 300 Protestants and Catholics. Music on traditional Irish and Protestant drums marked the occasion as a model of what the Forthspring Community Center hopes to see in a peaceful resolution to the long-lasting "Troubles."

The community center is designed to bring together Catholics and Protestants in the surrounding neighborhoods in women's groups, youth projects, Bible studies, dialogue groups and a cafe.

For Moser, the simple fact that the community center is open is a major achievement.

"The congregation could've just decided to let the building be closed [after last year's arson]," Moser says. "But they decided to move into new territory and joined in forming this group that is now the Forthspring Community Center. Maybe this will be a model for churches across the world. It doesn't matter if you're a Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew or a Muslim. The important thing is figuring out how to live in harmony with the neighbors who are all around us." *MBM staff*

Renewed hope for Irish church

Belfast (GCMC/MBM)—At the opening celebration (see Northern Ireland article, page 14), we were a mixed crowd of Protestants and Catholics, laypeople and clergy, old and young. A Franciscan brother in his robes attended—many in the congregation had never worshiped with a Franciscan. A nun, Sister Ann, from Cornerstone, led the music and worship for part of the service—also a first for the church. People of many nationalities came, many who never go to church.

The high point of the "ceile" (dance party), and for me one of the high points of the whole weekend, was the final act—a performance by Different Drums, playing traditional Irish and Protestant drums. By the end of the evening little children and old folks alike were up and dancing.

FORTHSPRING
The Community Together
Brian Yoder (MBM)

Dave Moser with Mennonite Board of Missions member Sally Schreiner in front of Forthspring Centre

Saturday's service with Lesslie Newbigin was also very meaningful. A friend, Tony Macaullay, commented after the service, "It is rare I can say I am inspired in church. I have worked all my life for parachurch agencies and have all but given up on the church in Ireland ever being relevant to people. When I see what is happening here, I have renewed hope for the future of the church in Ireland."

I feel like I am coming down off a spiritual high. But now the real work begins. We have a big task ahead of us—proclaiming the gospel, bringing the community together and dismantling walls. *Dave Moser*

The work of Menno Wiebe, long-time director of Native Concerns for Mennonite Central Committee Canada, was recognized at MCC Canada's annual meeting. Wiebe is retiring at the end of this year. Leonard Doell, Native Concerns coordinator for MCC Saskatchewan, and Bernard Wood, a Native leader from Manigotagan, Man., paid tribute to Wiebe. "The trust that has been built up [between Native groups and MCC] over the years has to carry on in some way," said Wood.

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Mennonite Economic Development Associates is sponsoring a retreat for Mennonite women who want to get to know other women in business, enjoy spiritual and physical development and learn sailing skills. The July 10-12 retreat, led by Carol Suter, will be at the Womanship Sailing School at Annapolis, Md. Cost of the retreat is $825 U.S./$1,130 Cdn. Registration and a down payment of $150 are due by April 15, 1998. For more information, contact MEDA at 851 NW 45th St., Kansas City, MO 64116; 1-800-665-7026.

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Reports about new investment opportunities in low-income countries, membership growth and record giving highlighted the Nov. 7 annual meeting of Mennonite Economic Development Associates in Kansas City, Mo. Theme of the convention was "Leading from the Heart." Speakers included Anne Beiler, founder and president of Auntie Anne's Pretzels. More than 450 people from North America, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti attended the convention. A new Business Ventures Department will enable North Americans to give or loan money to MEDA, which the agency will then invest in businesses in low-income countries. ***John Longhurst***

Mennonite Disaster Service contributed $25,000 Cdn. to a Christmas fund for survivors of the Red River flood in Manitoba. The fund supported a community initiative called "Christmas in the Valley," a Nov. 29 to Dec. 18 effort to renew hope and community spirit in the valley during the holiday season. Christmas parties for children included a visit from Santa, a gift and a goodie bag, caroling and refreshments. Six hundred families received Christmas hampers. People made ornaments and decorations for their homes at craft-making sessions. Communities that participated were St. Adolphe, Ste. Agathe, St. Jean-Baptiste, Letellier, Roseau River Reserve, St. Norbert and Rosenort.

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In its 36th year, the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba continues to cause suffering among ordinary Cubans—without weakening Cuban leader Fidel Castro's power. Because of Cuba's economic downturn of the last few years, aggravated by the U.S. embargo, more Cubans today are malnourished and dying from infectious diseases, and more babies are born with low birth weights. While U.S. government policy has made it difficult for U.S. Christians to keep in touch with Cuban Christians, Mennonite Central Committee staff have been reaching out to Cubans over the past decade. Efforts include regular visits to Cuban Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups, bringing Cuban church leaders to the United States to tell their stories, sending Bible teachers from Latin and North America to share the Anabaptist perspective, sponsoring Latin and North American delegations to Cuba to get to know the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches there, helping Cubans develop Christian education materials, sending material aid via Church World Service and advocacy work so that U.S. citizens understand the impact of U.S. laws on Cubans. *Martin Shupack*

Two General Boards move closer to one

Denver (GCMC/MC)—Colors flew as the General Boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) met here Nov. 21-22.

The colors were sheets of construction paper—purple for the GCs, yellow for the MCs. Wanting to act together while realizing they operated under different bylaws, board members agreed to identify their votes by denomination in this way.

The two boards gave final approval to a statement on violence for their two denominations. They agreed on a staffing budget for the next conjoint assembly, to be held in 1999 in St. Louis. And they authorized their two nominating committees to work together to bring a joint slate to that meeting.

One executive: But what energized the meeting most was a proposal from Tom Lehman, Hickory, N.C., to bring together the two General Board executive committees into one to make decisions and propose agenda for both boards.

Nor were they satisfied to stop there. They asked the new joint executive committee to plan an agenda that would have the two boards meeting together most of the time next March, with only one separate session, if any. At the Denver meeting, both boards spent about half their time meeting separately.

Dave Linscheid

Dialogue: *From left, Doug Kauffman, Robert Zehr, Lois Thieszen Preheim and Leslie Francisco talk together during joint General Board meetings in Denver.*

"When we meet separately, we continue to talk about each other," said Lee Delp, Harleysville, Pa. "Together, we talk to each other."

What polity? But if meeting together brought quick agreement and swift action, what to do about polity for a new denomination did not. As the two boards met, members were well aware that Franconia Conference (MC) and Germantown Mennonite Church (a dually affiliated congregation in Philadelphia) had severed their ties over the issue of accepting into membership gay and lesbian people in covenanted relationships.

"I hear a lot of talk about polity, and it's always in terms of homosexuality," said Duane Oswald, Fresno, Calif. "That's unfortunate. Let's set aside this issue, because it clouds what we do, and let's talk about how we do church together."

Others agreed. Whether or not such a discussion should begin before MCs and GCs meet together in St. Louis in 1999 wasn't clear. What the boards did agree on was that the issue could take years to resolve.

Denver was not the first time the two general boards were together. Previous meetings took place in 1993 and 1996.

"Coming from the smaller GC group, I surely didn't feel like a minority," said Marian Franz, Washington.

GC sessions: In addition to meeting with the MC General Board, the GC General Board conducted business in separate sessions before and after the joint meetings.

In an opening report on Friday morning, GC general secretary Jim Schrag noted that anticipated integration with the Mennonite Church is "still a moving target, but overall it is positive.

"We have found that our theological foundation is the point of greatest compatibility," Schrag said. "It is our cultural and historical differences that set us apart."

The GC General Board conducted an in-depth review of the GC Commission on Education, and heard reports from Ministerial Leadership Services (MLS) and the Higher Education Council (HEC).

MLS director John Esau reported that, for the first time ever, staff from the GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada ministerial leadership offices met together. HEC secretary Dale Schrag described the newly formed Higher Education Integration Committee. *J. Lorne Peachey, Dave Linscheid*

Commissions work on a variety of issues

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Fall meetings of the commissions of the General Conference Mennonite Church included site visits, welcoming new staff and the inevitable disussions of integration.

CHM: A day-long field trip to City on a Hill projects highlighted the meeting of the Commission on Home Ministries, Sept. 11-13 in Abbotsford and Vancouver, B.C.

CHM now awards $25,000 U.S. annually to support holistic outreach efforts by Mennonite churches in urban areas. This year's grant went to five congregations and a discipleship training program in the Vancouver-Fraser Valley area of British Columbia.

"Seeing firsthand the way congregations are working in local communities gives us a better feel for what we're about as a commission," said CHM chair Floyd Bartel, Newton. "It's a real strength of having our fall meetings on location."

During CHM business sessions, members heard a report from Hugh and Janet Sprunger, who are retiring from their position as coordinators for Asian and Chinese Ministries. The report included several specific recommendations for working at getting Chinese and Asian people into more active leadership roles.

CHM voted unanimously to authorize staff to invite several Chinese and Asian church leaders to attend and participate in CHM meetings as resource people in discussions about ethnic ministries and the church.

Commission members heard about the progress of the Training for Peace project, an attempt to coordinate the work of several entities, including CHM, who have been working on peace issues, and an update of CHM's involvement in the Peace Evangelists program. CHM approved participation in both.

COM: The Commission on Overseas Mission also met in Abbotsford, B.C., Sept. 12-13.

COM officially accepted the resignation of Glendon Klaassen, executive secretary, announced earlier this year. Klaassen retires May 31, 1998. At the same time, COM noted the presence at the fall meeting of newly appointed joint administrative staff for Asia: Sheldon Sawatzky, Newton, for East Asia, and John F. Lapp, Elkhart, Ind., for West Asia and the Middle East.

The commission discussed a proposal from the Mission Integration Task Force, made up of representatives from various Mennonite mission agencies, including COM, who work on issues related to integrating the agencies. COM chair Tom Lehman, Hickory, N.C., noted that one signficant change was "to write the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, specifically the Ministries Commission, into the mission integration discussion as a full partner."

COM spent time discussing the possibility of an ongoing COM coordinator for Canada, a role filled by Larry Kehler until he retired earlier this year, and heard from Sawatzky about the need for more pastoral care/counseling for mission workers in East Asia and elsewhere.

COE: After several years of struggling with financial and related personnel difficulties, the Commission on Education has entered "a new day," said COE chair Jeff Wright, Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

The commission met Oct. 2-5 in Newton. COE accepted the executive secretary search committee's recommendation of Dennis M. Good, Faith & Life Press operations manager, as COE executive secretary and publisher for FLP.

To indicate clearly "a new era of leadership" after a difficult period in which restoring FLP's financial stability resulted in some loss of jobs and programs, Wright offered his resignation as COE chair effective at the end of fall meetings. COE, however, was reluctant to accept this gesture and, in a ballot vote, affirmed him as chair. Wright accepted the vote of confidence and withdrew his resignation.

The commission heard the good news of a significant drop in the FLP operating loss, by nearly $100,000, during the first six months of this fiscal year. In addition, FLP recorded a net profit of $23,455 for the same time period, compared to a net loss of $95,965 a year ago.

COE member Wes Sawatsky, who summarized the financial reports, said that record sales and profits realized by Mennonite Press of Newton have contributed to FLP's considerably improved financial health. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Blessings, Expressions of Faith manufactures nun dolls dressed in the traditional, pre-Vatican II habits of at least 32 different religious orders, reports Ecumenical News International. The 20-inch ceramic dolls cost up to $199 U.S. The business plans to give some profits to a fund for retired nuns. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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A U.S. federal court ruled that New Caney High School in Texas violated students' right to free exercise of religion when it prohibited students from wearing rosaries under the school's "gang-related" paraphernalia rule. The school claimed the rosaries resembled a Houston gang symbol, reports the Evangelical Press News Service. The school was ordered to allow students to wear the rosaries. (*Mennonite Brethren Reporter*)

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The land where the Battle of the Little Bighorn began is for sale for $2.95 million. Christopher Kortlander, owner of the property that includes a marble tomb of the battle's unknown soldier and a museum/gas station development, listed the property with Sotheby's of London. The property, on the Crow reservation, is not part of the U.S. National Park Service Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. (*Indian Life*)

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Billy Graham spoke about the body of Christ on Robert Schuller's "Hour of Power" show on June 1. Graham said, "The body of Christ comes from all Christian groups around the world, or outside the Christian groups. I think everybody who loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they are conscious of it or not, they are members of the body of Christ. ... They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their heart that they need something that they don't have and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved and that they are going to be with us in heaven." (*Context*)

Sexual abuse continues to be the most rapidly growing violent crime in the United States, reports the Kansas City *Star*. Each year more than 700,000 women are sexually assaulted. At least 20 percent of adult women and 12 percent of teenage girls have experienced some sort of sexual abuse or assault. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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The Church of England and the Methodist Church in Britain are considering merging, ending 300 years of division. The Anglican Church's decision to ordain women makes unity plans with the Roman Catholic Church less likely but has made possible new talks with the Methodist Church. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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An image of Mother Teresa sat with the goddess Durga during the Durga Puja festival in Calcutta and throughout West Bengal, India. The festival celebrates the victory of Durga over a demon king and symbolizes the victory of good over evil. Other images for the festival included dinosaurs from *Jurassic Park*, Princess Diana and Indian cricket player Saurav Ganguly. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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"My son was abducted. Three weeks later we found him—a headless skeleton. I could only identify him by his clothes." Stories of horror like this are now being told in South Africa. For the past year and a half, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa has heard people's stories of abuse under apartheid. Mennonite Central Committee workers Evelyn and Karl Bartsch trained caregivers to continue the work for healing. The Bartschs also prepared a how-to manual, *Stress and Trauma Healing*, which is being used by laypeople and pastors to minister to neighbors and friends. (MCC)

South African women put Scripture in context

Newton, Kan. (GCMC/AIMM)—When a group of educated, professional women pronounced themselves "illiterate" in one area, something unique was born in South Africa.

Back in 1987, five South African women, four black and one white, were driving the 500 miles back from Johannesburg to Umtata, in the Transkei region, after having attended a conference sponsored by the South African Council of Churches.

"Even though these women had gone to church all their lives," says Jean Isaac. Jean and her husband, Gary, work in Umtata under the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. "They felt biblically illiterate. They decided to start a Bible study group. They wondered if the Bible had a particular message for women, so they began looking at the Bible that way."

Jean Isaac

Transforming Bible study: *From left, Miriam Raziya, Zola Mahlangu and Thelma Songwaxa, members of the Umtata Women's Theology Group, work on revising one of their Bible study booklets.*

Thus the Umtata Women's Theology Group was formed. Out of the group came a booklet entitled "Women, the Bible and the Contemporary Church," the first in what is currently an eight-volume series of Bible studies contextualized for women in Southern Africa, with three additional booklets scheduled for publication in 1998.

The material comes from the group, which meets regularly to brainstorm topics and then assign them to teams, usually two of the group. Those women choose biblical texts and develop questions. The whole group then "does" the study together. Nelda Thelin, another Mennonite, writes the booklet out of this process, usually gathering more material, and Jean edits it.

The first booklet was an overview of women in the Bible, and the next two looked at women in the Old Testament and New Testament, respectively. Since then, topics have been related more to social issues, such as sexuality, marriage, divorce, parenting and AIDS.

Widely accessible: Although the Umtata Women's Theology Group consists largely of educated, professional women—teachers, university professors, staff in government offices, health-care workers—its vision for the Bible studies is to make them as widely accessible as possible. To this end, members of the group are working on translating all the studies into Xhosa. Three have been done in Afrikaans. The booklet on AIDS was translated into Sotho and Zulu as well.

The group prints the booklets itself, using Jean's and Nelda Thelin's computers and a photocopier. Jean puts the booklets together. They are promoted largely by word of mouth. Group members also distribute them at conferences they attend.

As far as Jean knows, the Umtata Women's Theology Group is unique in South Africa, and it has benefited its members in ways not as visible as a series of booklets. Members of the group have told her that the group sharing is important to them, as is learning to interpret what the Bible says. One member, Zola Mahlangu, said this: "I have gained a sense of confidence as a Christian woman with the assurance that women played and still play a leading role in the church."

Being a member of the group has also affected Jean. "It has broadened my viewpoint considerably and made me think of things differently," she says. "I am much more aware of what African women are facing. And when I talk to women here [in the United States], I discover that we have many of the same issues, such as marriage, family and parenting issues, and especially the place of women in the church. We're just standing on different stages." *Melanie A. Zuercher*

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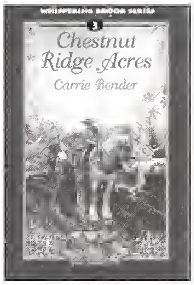

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Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open: **Spanish instructor** (80 percent time with benefits). Position begins Jan. 1, 1998.

Send resumes or inquiries to **Ronald L. Hertzler, Acting Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

Director of operations for **Frederick Mennonite Community**, a CCRC located in Montgomery County, Pa. Responsible for daily operation of the long-term care, assisted living and independent living units, assisting in budgeting, long-range planning and other projects as needed. A current NHA license is required.

Please send resume and salary requirements to **HR Manager, P.O. Box 498, Frederick, PA 19435**; fax **(610) 754-6475**.

Urgent opening with Mennonite Central Committee: Computer programmer/analyst. Two-year, full-time volunteer service opportunity with Ten Thousand Villages, Akron, Pa. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Volunteer will be responsible for development, maintenance and support of business software on an IntraNetware LAN system. Two years programming experience preferred.

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact **Prem Dick, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-1151**; e-mail **psd@mcc.org**.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION for Dec. 9, 1997, of *The Mennonite*, publication no. 259-330, published semimonthly (24 issues annually) at Newton, Kansas, 67114, required by Act of Congress (39 U.S.C. 3685). Annual subscription price $28. Published by General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church of Newton, Kansas, a religious nonprofit organization. Editor, Gordon Houser, of Newton, Kansas. Security holders owning 1 percent or more of total securities, none. (No stock issued.) Known bondholders, etc., none.

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Signed, Gordon Houser, Editor

Moving?

Let us know at least six weeks before you move.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following position open: **Assistant to the director of business affairs** (full-time). Position requires strong business background. Administrative and computer literacy skills necessary.

Send resumes or inquiries to **Jeffrey A. Ambrose, Director of Business Affairs, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446-4398.**

The Leadership Commission of the **Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada** invites applications for the position of **interim conference minister**. The incumbent is retiring June 30, 1998. The request is for an interim staff person from summer 1998 to June 30, 1999, while the job description is reviewed.

Responsibilities: The primary responsibility is to provide pastoral care and support to pastors, their spouses and families. Other responsibilities include working with the Leadership Commission in providing training and resources to congregations around leadership needs. A full job description is available upon request. **Qualifications:** seminary education, ministerial credentials with the Mennonite/General Conference Mennonite Church, significant work in Mennonite congregations, some familiarity with congregations of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. **Application deadline: Jan. 15, 1998.**

Direct applications or inquiries to **Executive Secretary MCEC, 4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2; (519) 650-3806**; fax **(519) 650-3947**; e-mail **elshorst@mcec.on.ca**.

Service Adventure leaders needed for the 1998-99 season. Service Adventure, an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2 month service-learning program for young adults ages 17 to 20, needs qualified leaders. Leadership experience, interest in young adults, spiritual discernment and conflict resolution skills are desired. Two-year term. Accepting applications now for terms beginning fall 1998.

Contact **Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, (219) 294-7523**, e-mail **Kent@mbm.org**.

Mathematics, applied mathematics and computer science: The mathematics and computer science departments at **Goshen College** invite applicants for one to two teaching positions in mathematics, applied mathematics and computer science beginning in August 1998. One position is tenure-track; the other is initially a two-year appointment with a longer-term or tenure-track appointment possible depending on program growth. A master's degree and graduate study in mathematics, applied mathematics and/or computer science are required; a Ph.D. in those or related areas is strongly preferred. Applicants are expected to be qualified to teach lower- and upper-level courses in at least two of the three areas mentioned. Specific assignments will depend on individual qualifications and department resources. Women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, seeks faculty committed to the liberal arts and to Christian higher education and sympathetic to its expression in the Mennonite tradition.

Send a curriculum vitae and three professional references to **Dr. Paul A. Keim, Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503**; fax **(219) 535-7060**; e-mail **dean@goshen.edu**. Applications are encouraged through the Goshen College web site at **www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled.

Academic Dean for Bethel College

Bethel College invites applications and nominations for the position of **academic dean**. As the chief academic officer, the academic dean directs the college's educational program and personnel, overseeing faculty appointments, instructional budgeting, development and implementation of the curriculum, and academic support services. The academic dean must be a strong advocate for the educational philosophy of the college and a skillful administrator who can collaborate closely with the president, other administrators and the faculty. The dean should have a distinguished record of scholarship, service and college teaching.

Bethel College is a private, liberal arts, undergraduate college affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church and accredited by the North Central Association. Majors and concentrations include traditional liberal arts and science fields, preprofessional and accredited professional programs (nursing, social work and teacher education). The student body of 614 students is approximately two-thirds residential and traditional age and one-third nonresidential and nontraditional. Distinctive emphases include peacemaking and voluntary service, global awareness and personal discipleship rooted in free conviction and commitment to Christian community.

Bethel is an EO/AA employer; women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Review of applications will begin **Jan. 5, 1998.**

Contact **Academic Dean Search Committee, Office of the President, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th, North Newton, KS 67117-0531; www.bethelks.edu.**

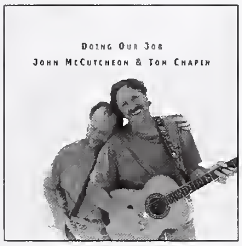
Reviews

MUSIC

BUILDING ON THE WORK

Doing Our Job *by John McCutcheon and Tom Chapin (Rounder Records, 1997, $10 U.S. cassette/$15 U.S. CD)*

Reviewed by Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor



These guys have been around a while—I've been listening to John McCutcheon since … well, never mind. For most of their careers, they've performed solo, and both—Tom Chapin in particular, McCutcheon in more recent years—are probably most widely known today for their excellent children's albums (the kind even parents can listen to 14 times in a row and still remain sane). In the past several years, however, they've done a number of concerts together, usually with bass player Michael Mark, often with woodwind artist Bobby Read. This is the first McCutcheon-Chapin recording, done live in St. Louis and in Arkansas City, Kan., with Mark and Read on board.

Twelve of the 15 cuts are original (words and music), by McCutcheon, Chapin, both together or Chapin with singer-songwriter Si Kahn. Overall, I didn't find this collection as compelling as some, probably because of a recurring theme of men looking back over a quarter-century of adulthood, e.g., McCutcheon's "The Older I Get": "Well, we were young, we were lean, we were seventeen,/Living on Hendrix, the Stones and Cream./Every time I think about it, I still get a buzz./The older I get, you know, the better I was."

But there are also some gems here. One is "Dead Man Walking," which McCutcheon wrote after reading Sr. Helen Prejean's book of the same title, before there was a movie. Too bad Tim Robbins (who directed *Dead Man Walking*) didn't know about this song; it belongs on the soundtrack: "It's an easier road to revenge than mercy/But an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind/Quiet on the tier/There's a dead man walking." Another is the Chapin/Kahn song "Our Mothers Built This City," based on the premise that New York was built by people who suffered and struggled far more than do their descendants—whose world nonetheless seems to be literally crumbling around them. "It seemed back then there was a chance for/Anyone willing to try./Now it looks like almost no one/Cares if poor folks live or die. ... Our mothers built this city./Our fathers built this town./We can build upon their work if you do, if I do,/Yes, we can build upon their work if we do now!"

And there is the last song on the album, "Welcome the Traveler Home," which McCutcheon wrote in honor of the 25th Walnut Valley Music Association festival held annually in Winfield, Kan. In both words and music, this song shows the influence of McCutcheon's nearly three decades of steeping himself in traditional American music, especially folk hymns, as well as the slender beam of faith and hope that always seems to underlie his music. "Like ships in the deep/Far from the shore/We look for the harbor/We look to the skies/For the wide open heart/And the wide open door. … Welcome the traveler home/As out in this wide world/We wander alone./Though our ways twist and bend,/We know in the end/We will welcome the traveler home."

BOOKS

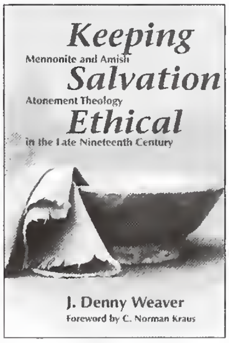
SALVATION AND PEACE

Keeping Salvation Ethical: Mennonite and Amish Atonement Theology in the Late Nineteenth Century *by J. Denny Weaver (Herald Press, 1997, 316 pages, $19.95 U.S./$28.50 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Walter Sawatsky, Elkhart, Ind.

Keeping Salvation Ethical does not really argue for works' righteousness, as the title implies. Weaver is trying to show how there is (or should be?) a Mennonite answer to "Are you saved?"—"Ask my neighbors."

Weaver seeks to show that salvation theories, or a theology of the atonement, to use his term, do matter. How so? For example, when you hear the words of installation at Communion, are you also thinking, "Christ's death paid the penalty, satisfied the demands of the angry judge"? Or, "God so loves even me that I must serve God always"? Or, "Death got swallowed up in victory, He is Risen, Christ is victorious over sin and death"? Those near paraphrases of Scripture represent three atonement theologies: satisfaction theory, moral influence theory, and Christus Victor theory.



Weaver's first thesis is that Christus Victor atonement theology was widely held by the Christian church initially but that after Christianity became an established religion, the emphasis changed. His second thesis, the most interesting and debatable one, is that Mennonite leaders a century ago in America all followed the satisfaction theory, then so prominent in American evangelical thought, except that they linked it to classic Anabaptist nonresistance. Then around 1900 two key leaders (John S. Coffman and Daniel Kauffman) separated atonement theology from ethics (nonresistance became a vital Mennonite distinctive, but not necessary for salvation).

A group reading, as in an adult Sunday school class, for example, would make both the book and its people come alive, especially if class members would compare it with recent general histories (e.g., *Mennonite Experience in America* or *Mennonite Encyclopedia*). Does salvation theory help explain the splinterings or new initiatives in evangelism and mission?

Yet another approach is a reverse reading, to test Weaver's third thesis about contemporary Mennonites. In order to hold together a church ever more prey to "outside influences," Weaver proposes "a systematic theology for Mennonites" that starts with the specific aspects of the Mennonite tradition, reasserting the link between atonement theology and peace theology.

SEEING, NOT STARING

Racial Conflict and Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective *by Andrew Sung Park (Orbis Books, 1996, 198 pages, $18 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Larry Kehler, Winnipeg

As the United States and Canada embody an ever-growing variety of cultures, the racism in many of our communities appears to be on the increase. What are we as North American Christians to do in this racist atmosphere? Andrew Sung Park, a Korean theologian who teaches at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, provides us with helpful insights from a Korean-American perspective in this book.

Park looks at the racism his people have experienced in Asia at the hands of the Japanese and Western nations, then focuses on racism here (e.g., the 1992 eruptions in Los Angeles after the Rodney King case; media bias, etc.). But he doesn't only point fingers outwardly. He also looks inside Korean-American communities and sees the sins of sexism, racism and labor exploitation that are part of their makeup, too.

The trauma racial conflict causes is deep and pervasive. Park gives a Korean name to this woundedness—"han." "Han," he says, "is the inextricably entangled experience of pain and bitterness imposed by injustices of oppressors." He then points to various ways these wounds can be healed.

Park critiques American society for its rampant individualism. "In the name of religious freedom, rugged individualism has mushroomed in this culture. ... [Such] individualism has brought forth racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, consumerism, and corporate America." He calls us to once again emphasize the extended family, even if in a modified form. He asks how it is possible to love our neighbor when we tend to ignore our parents.

Drawing on his Christian faith and the Asian culture from which he comes, Park suggests a number of ways to turn things around. He points out the importance of seeing, for example: We need to see others empathetically, not to "stare" at them.

This is a helpful book as we seek to embrace an inclusive Christian community that is color-blind and aspires to see the presence of Christ in the full variety of cultures with which we come in contact in our land.

A LUMINOUS DARKNESS

Job and the Mystery of Suffering *by Richard Rohr (Crossroad, 1996, 191 pages, $19.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editor

Richard Rohr is best known as a speaker and spiritual retreat leader, and his books have been based on talks he's given. Perhaps that's why he's so eminently quotable.

His latest book looks at the Book of Job, in which, he writes, "biblical revelation reaches both its summit and its dead end." This is so partly because "it moves us beyond words and appropriate theologies into a luminous darkness."

Rohr approaches Job as "the anatomy of a conversion." He examines the mystery of suffering that draws us to a sharper realization of God's presence. "Pain is an activator," he writes, "that forces us to choose between what is important and what is not."

People tend to use religion selfishly, to feel better or protect their cherished view of God. But Job teaches us that revelation comes through suffering and darkness, and only after our attachments to our self and our opinions crumble. We view God as omnipotent, infinite, perfect, but "if the suffering Jesus is the image and revelation of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), this is totally at odds with all the other philosophical and theological definitions of a supreme being."

Rohr makes his argument as he works his way through the text of Job. He writes as a preacher, challenging readers to look within themselves and question their previous understandings of spirituality.

People often stumble over the presence of evil in a world created by God. Rohr does not try to give a definitive, what he calls "left-brain," answer. He states baldly, "Evil and affliction seem to be a part of the plan and pattern by which we come to God. The Book of Job is a commentary on our struggle with this unwelcome pattern."

Until we accept the mystery of evil and suffering, we cannot grow. "The key moral question is not, 'How can we get rid of evil?' but rather, 'How can we use evil for good?'"

Rohr also makes helpful comments on prayer, truth, faith, the church and the need to be in relationship with the poor. Though short, this book offers rich rewards. It will challenge, provoke thought and move you to prayer. It shows what Job has to teach us about drawing near to God.

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Editorial

Out of our snail's shells

Change happens. When it does, we don't always like it. Often, in fact, we resist it, are frightened by it. Yet without change we don't grow.

Jesus announced change from the beginning of his ministry. Mark writes that Jesus proclaimed the good news of God: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:14).

That word "repent" (from the Greek word "metanoia") means literally to change one's mind, but it implies turning around, going in a different direction. The words on our cover reflect this goal of Jesus: "God turns us around."

"Christian faith is a decision," wrote Karl Barth, the famous Swiss theologian. And not only a one-time decision. We choose each day, each hour, to follow Christ. In all aspects of our life God invites us to repent wherever we are thinking wrong or going in the wrong direction. Barth calls this "a living confession." He writes that if our faith is a snail's shell in which we feel comfortable but does not involve itself with the lives of people around us, we have "not yet really come to believe."

We choose each day, each hour, to follow Christ. In all aspects of our life God invites us to repent wherever we are going in the wrong direction.

Some people enjoy challenges, look for new opportunities to try out their skills. I'm not one of them. I like routine. I lived in the same town until I went to college, and after graduating from college I've lived in the same town. When I was 12, our family moved about 10 blocks across town. Not such a great change, but for me it was terrible.

When I call for us to be open to change, to repentance, I'm preaching mostly to myself. I also speak as one who is in the midst of change. Only two more issues after this one remain of this magazine. After that I will become associate editor of a new magazine, though it will carry the same name as this one.

Many of my colleagues are also in the midst of change brought on by the decision to integrate the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, and it is not easy. The amount of work involved in merging two very different systems is much more than any of us anticipated. And while bringing these two systems together in their various parts, we are expected to keep the old ones going.

Wilderness: Our department, the Division of General Services, held a staff retreat early this month. A guest facilitator helped us talk about our feelings as we experience the stress of change. He used the image of going through the wilderness, as the Israelites did after they left Egypt. He said, "The wilderness will not kill us, although we may not be sure of that when we are going through it."

He offered some helpful advice about dealing with change. First, pay attention. We need to realize when change is happening so that we can recognize what God is calling us to. Second, take time for prayer, personal reflection, Bible reading, exercise, rest. Third, pay attention to our grief feelings. Change means we are losing something, and we need to mourn that. Rituals, loved ones, the Psalms all may help us do that.

I have been fortunate. I knew change was coming, that this magazine was ending. But I didn't know what God wanted me to do next. I did some research, some personal reflection, spent much time in prayer and talked with friends, especially my prayer group at church. All that has made this change less difficult, though it has had its moments of pain.

Change often brings pain, and such pain usually is necessary for growth. I wish this weren't true, but my experience leads me to acknowledge that it is. Jesus' call to repentance is so that we will "believe in the good news." Such good news may feel like bad news at first, as Eddy Hall (page 3) and David Morrow (page 6) testify. But if we stick with it and listen for God's voice, we will discover the good news of growth that God invites us to experience.

Gordon Houser

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Inside

Mennonites give medicine to Iraq / p. 11

Sudanese create art for peace / p. 15

Film review: *Amistad* / p. 21

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THE Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

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- Hazel: a one-woman alarm system (page 3)
- Use Hazel's story in a group (page 5)
- Melissa: a price beyond rubies (page 6)
- Use Melissa's story in a group (page 8)

Clothed with dignity and strength

(Proverbs 31:25)

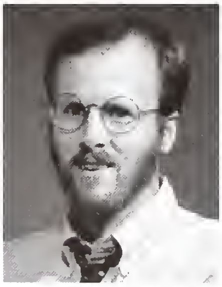
Prologue

When I began reading the stories in the study guide *Coming to the Table*, I wanted to reprint them all in *The Mennonite*. But that isn't possible. The two stories we include in this issue will whet your appetite. You can obtain the others by ordering the study guide from Mennonite Women, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Include a contribution of $4 U.S./$5 Cdn. to help cover the costs.

Melanie Zuercher, our assistant editor, wrote the study guide, telling stories of women she got to know while serving in eastern Kentucky as a volunteer with Mennonite Central Committee. She helps bring these women alive and communicates at least some of their strength and dignity in the face of struggle. She learned much from them, and so can we.

Read about Hazel (page 3) and Melissa (page 6), and use the worship and study aids (pages 5 and 8), for yourself or as part of a group. Melanie relates each story to Scripture and includes questions to provoke thought and discussion.

This is the next to last issue of this incarnation of *The Mennonite*. If you read the inside back cover of our final four issues, you will notice ads that explain what changes are coming. We want to make the transition from this magazine to the new one as seamless as possible.



A 13-month index of *The Mennonite* is available for free. Ask us for a copy. *gh*

Next issue: Final issue

Cover: Photo by Edward Wallowitch

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Hazel: a one-woman alarm system

Hazel is a woman of persistence who shows that one individual can make a difference.

Melanie A. Zuercher

In eastern Kentucky, towns are small and much of the population lives in rural areas. Where you live is largely determined by water because only where there is water is there any open, (sometimes) flat land on which to build. So homes are clustered along creeks and rivers and up in the hollows—folds in the mountains carved out by millions of years of water running down the steep slopes.

CLEO Photography—for illustration only

Hollows and river "bottoms" are like neighborhoods, often populated by extended family groups. People are generally reserved and cautious, not quick to trust those outside their own families.

When I was growing up in eastern Kentucky, in a county seat town, I was, almost unconsciously, aware of boundaries. I heard often, being from town but having a best friend who lived several miles out of town up the river toward Evarts, that "you don't dare go up past Evarts—those people are wild up there." (Folks could and did substitute other names for "Evarts" in that statement; you get the picture.)

When I returned to Kentucky as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer, my initial assignment was to develop literacy material for adult readers that was "relevant to their context" (living in rural Appalachia). I was told I should talk to a woman named Hazel, a native of the county, a staunch environmentalist, deeply admired by people who knew her. She lived "way up past Evarts" in a former coal camp (settlements built by coal companies to house the families of miners, now reverted to privately owned homes), and she didn't drive.

So I made the phone call, agreed on a place to meet Hazel, and got in my maroon MCC Nissan Sentra to drive to Evarts and then miles beyond. It was a cold, gray, rainy day, typical for early December in the mountains, with wisps of cloud drifting down into the heads of hollows and snagging on trees at the tops of mountains. The road twisted and turned as it followed the ever-narrowing Clover Fork, crossed railroad tracks, bisected coal camps huddled into their coats of coal dust and winter gloom.

I found Hazel waiting inside Brown's Grocery, leaning against the counter talking with the middle-aged couple who ran the store. I survived my first trip "up past Evarts" and in fact was destined eventually to go much farther up that road in Hazel's company.

Persistent as kudzu: This small, white-haired woman with the searching blue eyes knew the whole of upper Clover Fork, people and land, as though it were her own front porch, which in a sense it was. She never had driven a car, and she was pushing 70. But she had been around the world serving in the Army, and now she got everywhere she needed to go in friends' and neighbors' vehicles. She walked all over the mountains on her own sturdy feet. She knew the location of every deep mine and strip mine and logging road, legal or illegal, where to find ginseng and yellowroot and deer licks and bear tracks. She was a one-woman alarm system, persistent as kudzu, to state and federal mining regulation and environmental protection agencies about the relatively new problem of mine subsidence, the giving way of the earth on top of underground mines. Mine subsidence opened up yawning cracks and craters and sinkholes in the sides of mountains, the middle of dirt roads, sometimes people's back yards or wells or house foundations.

Over the next years I spent a lot of time with Hazel—tramping into the mountains to look at newly discovered subsidence; making the long drive to Frankfort, Kentucky's capital, to lobby legislators; eating Hazel's favorite food, chicken fried rice, in a restaurant on the way home; meeting her friends and neighbors from upper Clover Fork.

Hazel saved practically everything, and as a result her house resembled a giant filing cabinet, and she was most comfortable spending time with other people away from it—preferably outdoors. My memory of Hazel's hospitality is symbolized by two things: the

People, whatever hollow or neighborhood or village or barrio they call home, are all God's creations with hopes and dreams, fears and questions, loyalties and weaknesses, the capacity to love and be loved.

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egg sandwiches she always bought me at Ann's Crossroads Market at the beginning of our early-morning treks to Frankfort, and a blue butterfly made out of an accordion-folded page of a magazine, which Hazel rummaged out of an amazing assortment of articles piled high on her kitchen table to give me.

In Hazel I found friendship with someone of another generation, whose life experience was vastly different from my own. She was an example to me of one woman's persistence and belief that she could, as an individual, make a difference. And because of her, my childhood prejudices about "up past Evarts" disappeared. I hope I can say I learned something about prejudice in general. People, whatever hollow or neighborhood or village or barrio they call home, are all God's creations with hopes and dreams, fears and questions, loyalties and weaknesses, the capacity to love and be loved. The world tells us otherwise—that some people are "less worthy" than others. But because of our faith in the overwhelming love of Jesus, we believe in the gift of that love for all people.

Melanie A. Zuercher is assistant editor of The Mennonite. *The articles on pages 3-8 are excerpted from* Coming to the Table, *a Bible study guide published by Women in Mission and Women's Missionary and Service Commission, now joined as Mennonite Women. For a copy of the study guide, write Mennonite Women, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. A contribution of $4 U.S./$5 Cdn. is suggested to cover costs.*

Use Hazel's story in a group

Worship resources

Hymnal: A Worship Book (HWB) 695, corporate prayer based on Luke 10:38-42
HWB 815, responsive reading of Psalm 24

HWB 46, "I Sing the Mighty Power of God"
HWB 61, "Let All Creation Bless the Lord"
HWB 154, "This Is My Father's World"
HWB 487, "Teach Me, O Lord"

Journaling jump-starts

- What barriers do we put up between ourselves and others? What ideas do you have for breaking down these barriers?
- When and where do you feel closest to God? Briefly describe the place (even if it's in your own mind) and the feeling.

Bible study

Read Psalm 24:1-6; Luke 10:38-42.

Mary and Martha are, with Rachel and Leah, probably the best-known sisters in the Bible. They are also featured in John 12:1-8 and John 11:1-45. In both stories Martha keeps her characteristic "practical nature" and Mary her sensitivity to the spiritual side of things. John 12, in particular, tells us that Jesus was at the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus (whom he had raised from the dead in Chapter 11), where "Martha served" and Mary took perfume, anointed Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. When others at the table expressed displeasure with Mary's extravagance, Jesus defended her.

When we hear the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10, the emphasis is almost always on Jesus' words in verse 42, that "Mary has chosen the better part"—and so should we. Yet, as Sue Clemmer Steiner pointed out in an on-line Bible study based on this story, how would the work of the church get done without those of us who fill the Martha role? Who would make the coffee, cook for potlucks and clean up afterward, teach and care for children, bake and quilt for relief sales, host visiting speakers or musicians in our homes, sew for missions?

We have assumed that Jesus' words about "the better part" in verse 42 applied to Mary's attentive listening to his teaching. We've forgotten that he said to Martha, "You are worried and distracted by many things" in contrast to there being "need of only one thing." Perhaps Jesus' word is affirmation of the attention and focus given to what we have chosen, whether "doing" or "being." Sue Clemmer Steiner suggests that Jesus' desire for us is to try and balance the doing and being, which are both "needful things."

My friend Hazel's chosen part was to experience the natural environment to the fullest and to speak for it as best she could. What part have you chosen? Are you content or dissatisfied with it? What might help you to "balance" more? *Melanie Zuercher*

Melissa: a price beyond rubies

Despite a hard youth, this young woman is an intelligent, determined survivor.

Melanie A. Zuercher

During my second year as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer, I became friends with two different groups of Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers. These were people—generally young, just out of high school and not ready to go to college or not sure what to do next with their lives, or retired folks—who signed on to work with MDS for three to six months, instead of the usual week or two. They were willing to go to a disaster location and work for an extended period of time.

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However, by some quirk of history, in 1987-88 there were no natural disasters severe enough to have MDS units set up in their wake. So these MDSers did their terms of service in eastern Kentucky, working with some of the low-income housing repair organizations with which MCC was affiliated in the region.

They often came to my house to eat supper and play games or watch a movie. One evening as we sat around the table talking, they told about a woman whose house they'd been working on for a couple of months.

"I found out today that Melissa's 32," said Marv. "Do you believe that? She has six kids, and Robbie's almost 16, and she's only 32!"

I was 27 at the time. I found the scenario pretty scary. I wanted to know more about Melissa.

"She talks to us a lot," Bill said. "She's going to school at Southeast [the local community college] and a lot of times she's at home taking care of Joey, the youngest, and doing her homework when we're there.

"We've put a new roof on her house, built a porch, put in insulation. She says her grades are the best they've ever been because she feels like she's worth something, since she lives in a house that looks decent and that stays warm and since we've taken the time to talk with her."

"She told me that on the days we're there and she's gone to class, she can't wait to come home and bring us Oreos and show us how good her papers are," Jenny added. "She really told me that."

I heard more about Melissa as time went on. There were stories of the antics of her "baby," Joey, who was 4 and spoiled, and her other "baby," in the MDSers' opinion, her live-in ex-husband Dennis, who was younger than I was and who managed to hold a steady job in the mines, but judging by the Michelob cans in the backyard was guzzling down much of his pay. I heard about the oldest daughter, Cindy, entering the troubled teens, and Robbie, who wanted to join the Army. I wanted to meet the woman who lived in the midst of all this and brought home straight A's.

Chain-smoker's voice: Six kids—I imagined a plump, matronly woman with dark hair and incredible organizational skills. The woman I met was slender, intense and red-headed, with snapping dark eyes and a low, husky, chain-smoker's voice. As I sat at the kitchen table visiting with her that first time, her house was the center of a whirlwind: children (hers and their friends) running in and out the door and all through the house, puppies on the front porch, Dennis in the living

I remember more clearly than the troubled times laughing with her across the piles of mail and children's homework on the kitchen table.

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room with the TV turned up full volume, Joey whining for a drink, and Melissa in the middle of it all with her books and papers shoved to one corner of the table. She offered me a cup of coffee—instant, which I hate, but I took it and drank it and smiled through the noise because in spite of it all, I saw why Melissa's house was the MDSers' favorite place to work.

Melissa and I became a two-person book discussion group—she read even more voraciously than I did, and me with only a cat to care for. We talked about current events—she was furious about U.S. involvement in Nicaragua and knew far more about the Iran-Contra hearings than I did. She told me about the classes she was taking and some of her career dreams. I talked to her about my job and the community organization I worked for as an MCC volunteer. She got interested, and joined the chapter group hoping to organize her neighbors to do something about the water problems in their coal camp community, and even became the chapter representative to the steering committee for a while.

As our relationship progressed, Melissa told me more about herself. She grew up in Ohio—her parents had joined the great out-migration when there were no jobs in the coalfields in the '50s and '60s. She was raped by a relative. She got pregnant with Robbie at 16, married and divorced his father, who hit her and the baby; married the father of Cindy, Caroline, Jason and Lucy and lost him to a car accident; married and divorced Dennis, Joey's father, who nonetheless still lived with them.

Melissa finished her associate of arts and wanted to go for a bachelor's, but the closest four-year college was 80 miles one way, and her car could barely get her into town and back. The MDSers finished their work on her house and then their terms of service and went home. She and Dennis fought frequently. Sometimes he'd go home to his parents, a couple of miles up the road, for a few days or a week, but he always came back, and she always took him back. Sometimes Melissa was so wound up from stress that she took pills to keep herself from flying to pieces. I'd find her a few houses away at her friend Terry's, sitting and staring into space, not speaking. Later she would cry and say she didn't deserve any better than Dennis and the life she had.

I don't know what's happened to Melissa. After I moved over the mountain to another MCC unit, I lost track of her. I remember more clearly than the troubled times laughing with her across the piles of mail and children's homework on the kitchen table. I have much to thank her for—in her bright intellect, I found some of my own mirrored back; in her eager friendship, I found affirmation; in her story, I saw the steel strand at the center of a survivor.

I hope I can thank her face-to-face someday, and tell her what I wasn't able to say back then, that, like the good woman in Proverbs, "her price is beyond rubies." For now, this is all I can give her.

Melanie A. Zuercher is assistant editor of The Mennonite. *The articles on pages 3-8 are excerpted from* Coming to the Table, *a Bible study guide published by Women in Mission and Women's Missionary and Service Commission, now joined as Mennonite Women. For a copy of the study guide, write to Mennonite Women, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. A contribution of $4 U.S./$5 Cdn. is suggested to cover costs.*

Use Melissa's story in a group

Worship resources

Hymnal: A Worship Book (HWB) 694, prayer
HWB 822, responsive reading

HWB 130, "O God of Mystery and Might"
HWB 137, "Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive
HWB 145, "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
HWB 147, "Oh, How Wondrous the Grace"
HWB 486, "God of Our Life"

Journaling jump-starts

- What makes a survivor? Describe someone you know (including yourself) who is a survivor and why they are.
- Think of a relationship in your own experience that didn't turn out as you wanted it to. Why did things happen as they did? Where was God? Where in this can you find God? find hope?

Bible study

Read Psalm 103; Mark 14:3-9.

In the story of the anointing at Bethany, we find Jesus once more in a questionable place: the house of Simon the leper. Leprosy, a term given to a number of skin diseases, was regarded as a contagious, ritual impurity. Eating with a leper was a situation in which purity could not possibly be maintained; furthermore, it rendered you "unclean" indefinitely after.

Different versions of the story appear in Matthew, Luke and John, as well as Mark. Luke's account places the anointing much sooner in Jesus' ministry than do the other three, which place it near the end, close to his death. In Luke's account, the unnamed woman characterized as a sinner bathes Jesus' feet with her tears and dries them with her hair. In John's Gospel, the woman is named as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus. In Luke and John, Jesus' feet are anointed, while in Matthew and Mark it is his head.

Some things are consistent throughout. In each case, a woman performs a service of love and devotion for Jesus—in itself a suspicious thing. In each case, the woman's boldness earns a rebuke from someone who witnesses the act. And in each case, Jesus defends the woman's demonstration of extravagant hospitality.

"The poor you will always have with you," Jesus says in this story from Mark. This is not a justification for poverty. It reminds us that in serving the poor, we minister to Jesus, lover of the poor and friend of the outcast, even lepers and "sinful" women. But, in this context of a woman's unfettered giving of her best to Jesus, this is even more a reminder that those we serve, usually because we consider them less fortunate than ourselves, deserve from us not only "the least we can do" but "the best we can give."

"She has done what she could," says Jesus of the woman at Bethany. These words describe Melissa in the whole of my experience with her, even when her life seemed most bleak to her and even to me. What does it mean to do what we can? What does it mean to you in your context and situation? How can we serve Jesus with extravagance and joy—not necessarily materially, but certainly spiritually? *Melanie Zuercher*

Letters

THE BIBLE IS CLEAR

I fail to understand the reasoning of those people and churches who reject what the Bible clearly says about homosexuality in Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:9-10 and give their approval to such a filthy lifestyle that practicing homosexuals engage in, because they say they are "sexually oriented" that way. Would those people and churches also give their approval to people who practice the other sins mentioned? How about rapists, homosexual pedophiles that sexually abuse young boys, or heterosexual pedophiles that sexually abuse young girls because they claim to be "sexually oriented" that way?

Psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists are not at all agreed that homosexuals are born that way, but many are convinced that it is a learned behavior from something in their youth that turned them in that direction, such as an absent father or domineering mother. I also suspect that a good many who have accepted that lifestyle were possibly seduced by pedophiles into that lifestyle. The fact remains that large numbers of former homosexuals have been set free from their addiction when they accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and/or sought help from Exodus International or other, similar organizations.

Newspaper columnist Cal Thomas recently reported that the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuals, after a two-year study involving almost 860 homosexuals who wanted to change, and more than 200 psychologists and therapists who treated them, said, among other things, that before treatment 68 percent perceived themselves as exclusively or almost exclusively homosexual, but after treatment only 13 percent still perceived themselves that way. Before treatment 63 percent indicated that they had frequent and intense homosexual thoughts, but after treatment only 3 percent still had such thoughts.

For those who think that a monogamous homosexual relationship is not wrong, would they hold the same position that if two people commit adultery or steal or get drunk, then it is not wrong, but if more than two are involved in the activity, then it is wrong? I doubt it.

I know God loves all of us sinners, regardless of what type, but he hates sin, and so should we. Jesus told people to repent from sin, not to continue practicing it.

If we love homosexuals, which we should, then instead of encouraging their agenda and lifestyle, we should be encouraging them to seek help to get set free from their addiction. *Arnold Reimer, Beatrice, Neb.*

WILL MISS COLUMN

I was sorry to read that J.B. Miller won't be writing many more columns about fiscal health for *The Mennonite.*

His "seven observations" in the Nov. 25, 1997, issue (page 12) were interesting and informative, as have been his previous articles.

His fourth observation, that pastors often have a poor understanding of economics, is a poignant one. In fact, it is rare to find almost anyone who has an excellent understanding of the so-called "dismal science."

The intricacies of the roles of labor, materials and capital that are needed to create wealth are not easy to absorb. Congratulations to Miller for doing a good job on a difficult subject. *John A. Yeakel, Albuquerque, N.M.*

HORRIFIED

While paging through the Nov. 25 issue of *The Mennonite,* I was horrified as I came across the newsclip (page 19) concerning Christian radio host Rich Agozino and his comment stating that homosexuality should be punishable by death. In light of the controversy concerning this issue—the expulsion of Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia [from Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church] and the precarious position of Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City—it seems distasteful to print a newsclip that supports death as the consequence of love (albeit a controversial love) in fulfillment of the "Word of God." While I don't claim to know the editor's intent in printing this clip, I feel that it can only contribute to greater polarization on this issue. I do not support death as a means of punishment in any situation, and the notion that those who merely deviate from the relational norm should die as a result seems unduly harsh. As we enter a season of peace and love, it is my prayer that Mennonites can claim an identity of inclusiveness instead of dwelling on who should be allowed into God's church. *Grace J. Duerksen, North Newton, Kan.*

MODERN-DAY PHARISEES

Dora Dueck wrote an article ("Mennonite Anti-Semitism," July 22, 1997, issue, page 9) on anti-Semitism as it once existed in a Mennonite community, and we find the details hard to believe 50 years later.

Our grandchildren will surely see the way we marginalize our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters today as equally ludicrous.

I have attended conference sessions off and on since I was a boy. In 1986 a resolution was passed by the

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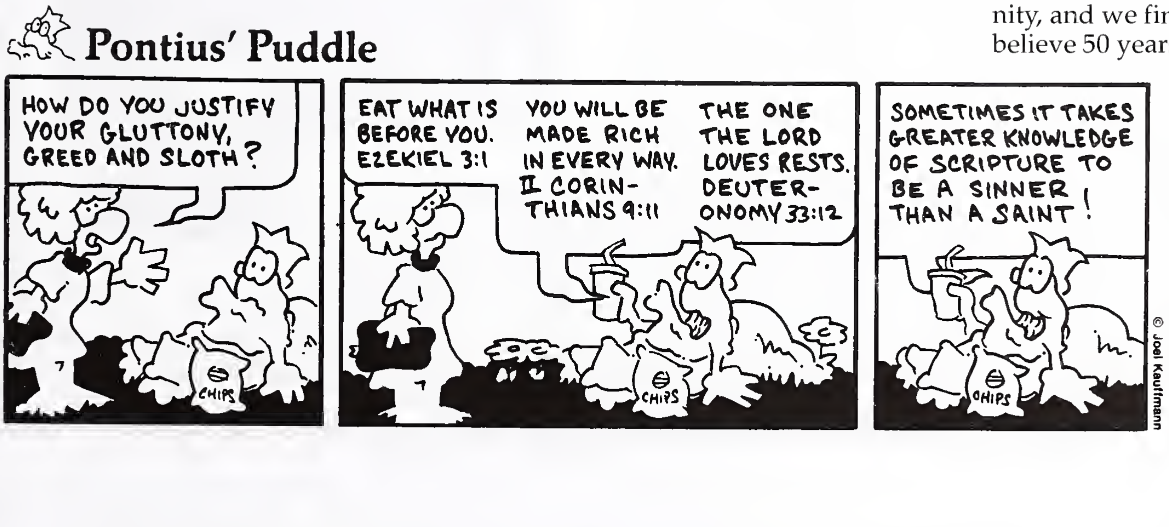
Pontius' Puddle
HOW DO YOU JUSTIFY YOUR GLUTTONY, GREED AND SLOTH?
CHIPS
EAT WHAT IS BEFORE YOU. EZEKIEL 3:1
YOU WILL BE MADE RICH IN EVERY WAY. II CORINTHIANS 9:11
THE ONE THE LORD LOVES RESTS. DEUTERONOMY 33:12
CHIPS
SOMETIMES IT TAKES GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE TO BE A SINNER THAN A SAINT!
CHIPS
© Joel Kauffmann

LETTERS *continued*

General Conference calling homosexuality a sin, and because of this I did not go to another conference until 1997. In 1997 a resolution was passed by the General Conference calling suicide a sin, and inviting dialogue about this issue.

I heartily agree that there is sin involved in both issues, but it seems to me that most of the sin is attributable to those who stand or sit in judgment. Once you designate a particular thing as sinful, you cut off discussion.

This is poor leadership. How did the people in power make their decisions? Were medical people consulted?

I am convinced that ministers and leaders will be called to account for all the young people between 18 and 24 who have committed suicide because of their sexual orientation.

It seems to me that on these issues we are taking our cues from the Evangelicals. These are the modern-day Pharisees and legalists—people to whom Christ referred in language bordering on profanity. He did not take his cues from these people.

We would do well to study these things carefully, realizing that in the four Gospels there is no reference to homosexuality. Inclusiveness is stressed at all times.

We might as well come to terms with it—it will not disappear. The church has already lost too many good people. It seems there is more spirituality outside the church than inside it.

One need not be a New Testament scholar to realize that our Lord did not like "religious" people and that he felt sorry for people of self-proclaimed power. *Paul Klassen, Winnipeg*

EASIER TO SHUN STRANGERS

Before we Mennonites cast out—no matter how tearfully—another congregation for giving membership to homosexual people in monogamous relationships, those making the decision might consider: If a man in your congregation cheats on his wife with a married woman and refuses both to stop and to leave the church, and if your congregation decides not to force him to leave, will you expect the larger church to vote you out?

To covet another man's wife is to break a commandment, after all. We need not search and debate several passages of Scripture. Are we treating homosexuality harshly because it is such a horrible sin, or because it is easier to shun those who for most of us are still strangers than someone with whom we might share a hymnal? *Wayne Steffen, Fresno, Calif.*

BIBLICAL HONOR

Regarding the letter titled "Wake-Up Call" (Nov. 11, 1997, issue, page 11), please read the following passages: Genesis 17:1-27; 18:1-33; 19:1-31; Romans 1:8-32; 1 John 1:22-2:1-21; Revelation 2:13-16; 22:12-16; Deuteronomy 30:1-20; 32:1-43; John 5:42-44; Proverbs 22:4; Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 2:15-19; Colossians 2:18-23; 2 Timothy 2:21,28; Psalm 15.

The problem is that this kind of biblical honor is not being passed from generation to generation anymore. Young people today don't hear about it. Often what they learn is "situation ethics"—right and wrong depend on the situation. This idea sounds right to someone who has not had the honor of God to influence him.

Honor is not taught at home much either. A child who sees his father knock his mother across the room, or his mother hit his father over the head with a skillet, won't know what honor is. He and his future wife will end up doing the same things. If a child sees his parents cheating on their taxes or lying to the government or being dishonest with their employers, he will think, Why should I work my whole life and have nothing when I can get whatever I want by lying?

Read Ephesians 6:8; 1 Corinthians 11:31; Proverbs 26:1; 1:32; 3:13-16; Hebrews 12:1,2; Romans 12:10-13; 12:1; 2:4-7; Psalm 8:1-6 and John 5:42-44. *Edward Lee Lyttle, #231968 N.C.C., B-49, P.O. Box 844, Burkville, VA 23922*

Goshen College seeks applicants for **two positions in nursing**—one full-time and one part-time—beginning in August 1998. The full-time position is a three-year teaching position with possibility of transition to tenure track as department needs evolve. Qualifications include graduate preparation in nursing and clinical expertise as a generalist, primarily with adult clients. Responsibilities include classroom, laboratory and clinical teaching. Ability to practice and work with students in a variety of settings is useful. Maintenance of clinical expertise is expected and research involvement is encouraged. Doctorate in nursing or related field preferred. Master's degree in nursing required. Teaching experience is preferred. Men and people from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume and professional references to: **Dr. Paul Keim, Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503;** fax **(219) 535-7060;** e-mail **dean@goshen.edu**. Applications are encouraged through the Goshen College web site at **www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled.

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News

MCC targets medicine for Iraqi children

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee will supply life-saving medicines to Iraqi children with newly diagnosed cases of leukemia. MCC seeks funds for the project, expected to cost $4,000 U.S./$5,700 Cdn. for each child who receives the two-year treatment course.

MCC plans to aid at least 25 children at the main pediatric hospital in Baghdad, Iraq's capital. The hospital, which serves the entire country, sees five to 10 new cases of leukemia each month. Childhood leukemia, a blood cancer, can usually be successfully treated when medicines are administered regularly in proper dosages. Without treatment, children with leukemia die.

International independent observers, including a Harvard medical study, noted Iraq's pediatric leukemia rate is now five times higher than the pre-Persian Gulf War rate. The cause is unclear, but some doctors, including international researchers, suspect a link to uranium-tipped shells and other weapons used against Iraq in the 1991 war.

> *"This [MCC plan to supply leukemia medicines] is the only ray of hope we have right now."*
>
> **Iraqi cancer specialist**

Others speculate that Iraq's extensive experimentation with chemical weapons may be a factor. As cancer cases increase, the availability of medicines is falling. United Nations economic sanctions, imposed on Iraq in 1990, have severely limited the amount of food and medicines entering Iraq.

"This [MCC plan to supply leukemia medicines] is the only ray of hope we have right now for the children in this ward," a disheartened cancer specialist told MCC worker Greg Foster when he visited Iraq's main pediatric hospital in early November.

Three agencies will collaborate on the project. MCC will purchase the medicines in Jordan. Islamic Relief Agency workers will hand-transport the medicines on their regular weekly trips from Jordan to Iraq. The Middle East Council of Churches' representative in Baghdad will regularly visit the children who are receiving MCC medicines.

To contribute, send a check to your nearest MCC office, designated "leukemia medicine for Iraqi children," or project #5855-4000. MCC also suggests constituents contact their governments, urging them to use their influence in the United Nations to ease sanctions against Iraq.

Since 1990, MCC has supplied canned meat, grain, school kits, medicines and other material resources to Iraq. MCC has no workers in Iraq.

Members of Voices in the Wilderness, a Chicago-based campaign to end U.N./U.S. sanctions against Iraq, have also been trying to get medicine into the country. A U.N. study done in 1995 estimated then that as a direct result of the sanctions, well over half a million Iraqi children under the age of 5 had died. In 1997, UNICEF reported that 960,000 Iraqi children are severely malnourished.

Voices in the Wilderness delegation member Mira Tanna, who works for the American Friends Service Committee in St. Louis, says she was moved to action by the plight of the people. "I could either listen to a sermon Christmas Day telling people how we should love children," she says, "or go to Iraq and try to stop children from dying."

A delegation that returned from Iraq on Dec. 3, 1997, carried video footage and photos of their travel to the southern port city of Basra. U.S. Customs agents detained the group in Detroit and confiscated the videos, film, personal diaries and all documents related to the campaign, claiming it contained "evidence of a crime having been committed." Delegation members agreed that the materials clearly show that the sanctions are a crime against innocent Iraqis. *From MCC and Christian Peacemaker Teams reports*

Inside the news

MCC linked to Labrador's only egg producers / p. 12

Mennonites in Congo celebrate unity in Christ / p. 14

Art exhibit brings together both sides of war / p. 15

Commentary: When a racism video becomes evangelistic / p.16

Ashland (Mont.) Christian Fellowship celebrated its 90th anniversary last December. Though the group is small, members have experienced spiritual renewal in the past year. *Steve Jessen in* **The Northern Light**

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On Nov. 25, 1997, the Mennonite church in the village of Bayursari Karyatani, central Lampung, Indonesia, was burned by a crowd of 300 to 350 people, who traveled about seven miles from another town on Sumatra island, apparently looking for church leaders. The pastor of the church was out of town at the time, but about 20 of the rioters chased the pastoral intern with knives and sabers before he escaped. The pastor, the intern and their families have sought refuge with others since it is currently not safe for them to stay in their homes. Damage estimate is $6,500 U.S., equivalent to the total annual income of all the households in the church. Despite this, members of the church do not seem frightened; on Dec. 7, the church conducted a revival service and baptized 27 new members. In the last two years, 105 Christian churches in Indonesia have been reported destroyed by burning. According to the most recent Mennonite World Conference census, there are about 160 Mennonite congregations in Indonesia, with approximately 63,000 members. *Marshall V. King with Paulus Widjaja*

Malaria kills 5,000 people every day, over half of them children under the age of 5. The disease affects almost half the world, mostly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. More than 2 million will die from it this year in 90 different countries. The World Health Organization says that mosquito nets treated with insecticide could save up to half a million African children each year. *World Health Organization*

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The Giving Project is offering team training for preaching and teaching about money. Weekend meetings for 1998 will be held in Sarasota, Fla., Feb. 27-28; Wichita, Kan., March 27-28; South Bend, Ind., April 3-4; Perkasie, Pa., April 17-18; Winnipeg, April 24-25; Fresno, Calif., May 1-2, and Abbotsford, B.C., May 15-16. Seminary credit is available for participation. For information contact The Giving Project, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; (219) 296-6236; fax (219) 296-6245.

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Lynette Meck, director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S., was invited to an annual ecumenical breakfast Nov. 20, 1997, at the White House with President Bill Clinton. Vice President Al Gore was also present. Meck was seated at a table next to Clinton's. "When he first arrived, his eyes looked a little red, like any other sleepy American who had just gotten out of bed. He looked better after he had eaten and sipped some coffee." The president's message was on diversity and racism in the United States. During a discussion period following the president's remarks, one guest encouraged the president not to assign sole responsibility for this issue to the religious community but to also use his influence and power to encourage Americans to embrace the nation's growing diversity and to confront racism. The president agreed this was necessary but also commended the religious leaders for their ongoing initiatives in addressing community needs and in promoting tolerance. *Emily Will*

The nitty gritty stuff of service

Mark Beach (MCC)

Davao City, Philippines (MCC)—Growing up on a farm near Marion, S.D., Tanya Ortman often heard her parents nostalgically recall their experiences as teachers in Africa with Mennonite Central Committee. So when Ortman graduated from Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., with a degree in social work, she, too, applied to MCC.

In fall 1996, Ortman arrived on the island of Mindanao to work with KAABAY, a local community health organization. But her MCC assignment has not turned out as she imagined—she has spent more time learning how a nonprofit agency struggles for funding than she has doing social work.

Ortman accepts with good humor her colleagues' nickname of "Thesaurus" as she helps them find the right word for funding reports. She would prefer to work more directly in providing services, but she says, "Although I sometimes feel I'm not contributing much, I'm growing more committed to what the organization is trying to do."

KAABAY—the name is an acronym that means "partner"—has five staff, including Ortman. At one point, staff hadn't been paid for more than six months, but continued working long days at the office. KAABAY focuses on helping the poorest people. On Mindanao that means Muslims and tribal people who live in remote areas. Staff endure grueling travel conditions.

Ortman has participated in several health surveys, including one in Dinagat, a community of tribal people who live on a river in log-pontoon houses. To reach Dinagat, KAABAY staff spent four hours on a bus, then three hours on a motorized canoe. "That's where Tanya slept with the pigs," Ortman's co-workers giggle. Here, she is pictured with people in a poor community in Davao City. *Pearl Sensenig*

MCC linked to Labrador's only egg producers

Happy Valley, Lab. (MCCC)—When Lem and Darla Seaward decided to become egg producers in their hometown of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, they were searching for a simpler, family-oriented lifestyle.

What they got were years of red tape that often confounded them and threatened to kill their dream of a barn full of contented chickens in this sparsely populated, isolated region of Newfoundland.

But the Seawards doggedly persisted, and in mid-July they shipped their first load of eggs to the local market. They can now proudly claim that their enterprise is the only egg producing operation in Labrador.

For Darla, who was raised in a farm family in Illinois, the venture seemed strewn with enough roadblocks to discourage even the most optimistic person. "Most people just lose energy. I mean we've been at this seven years," she says.

The Seawards met back in 1984, when Darla—working as a teacher under Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Truro, Nova Scotia—attended an MCC retreat in Labrador. Lem, who grew up in this northeastern region of Canada, acted as recreational guide at the retreat.

The couple married the next year and settled in Labrador. Over the years the Seawards have befriended numerous MCC volunteers, sharing meals and taking them fishing and berry picking.

They have also relied greatly on their MCC friends. Mark and Sonia Bromley, former MCC workers in Labrador, helped put together the business plan for the chicken operation. Other MCC volunteers helped with the barn raising. "So many people have passed through and given encouragement," says Lem.

He had worked as a carpenter for years but grew tired of the competition for work. The Seawards, who have four young children, wanted a change.

As it turned out, making the decision was the easy part. They never dreamed there would be so much work to just getting into farming. "Farmers here feel there's a thumb down on Labrador to keep [farming] from happening," Lem says.

They feel like they have dealt with just about every government department to get the necessary leases and meet the seemingly endless regulations. And they are not home-free yet. It could take years to obtain permission to live on their farm land, which they can lease but never own.

To obtain a farm lease from the provincial government, the Seawards had to produce a suitable business plan. Then, they waited for the quota—necessary for supply-managed products like eggs and milk. The wait almost cost them the land because they couldn't fulfill the terms of their land lease without it.

The land they chose to farm needed clearing, which meant permits and stumpage payments for every tree they cut down. Then they had to coax the appropriate departments to put in a serviceable road and install electric power.

Lem says it took a couple of years to construct the barn because they cut their own lumber and built their own roof trusses. They weren't allowed to do that on the farm, so they trucked in the finished trusses.

Nelson Scheifele, who along with his wife, Joy, coordinates MCC's work in Labrador and Newfoundland, can only shake his head at the lengths Lem and Darla have gone to accomplish their goals. "Well, I admire their tenacity," he says, adding he would have been discouraged from the outset.

"We like punishment," says Darla with a laugh, explaining that the people of Labrador are resilient and self-sufficient.

With permits in hand and the farm loan arranged, the Seawards brought in their 5,000 hens by truck from New Brunswick. Now they need a toe-hold in the Labrador market, which has typically been supplied with eggs from neighboring provinces.

Some other farmers have tried egg-producing operations in Labrador and failed. But Lem and Darla are the first to have a federally-inspected grading station to grade their own eggs, which they believe will help them. Still, Lem isn't naive: "It's going to be tight for the first couple of years."

But he doesn't take kindly to being told he's doing the impossible. "I think it will come out OK in the end."

Lem is already scheming about how he will increase their quota, and move on to new agricultural ventures. "I do believe agriculture in Labrador is going to blossom," he says. *Carol Thiessen for MCC Canada*

MCC Canada photo

Family friendly: *Darla and Lem Seaward, pictured in the center with their four children, with Lem's parents on the right and friends Brian and Irene Elliott on the left, have the only egg-producing operation in Labrador.*

Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, Okla., celebrated its 83rd anniversary Nov. 16, 1997, with morning and afternoon services and a traditional Mennonite meal.

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"The Ministry of Reconciliation," a conference for pastors, church consultants, businesspeople, teachers, counselors and others, will be held June 8-9 in the Chicago area. For more information, or to submit proposals for seminars, contact the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 1263 S. Highland Ave., Suite 1N, Lombard, IL 60148-4527; (630) 627-0507.

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New Life Ministries, a cooperative initiative for evangelism and church vitality, succeeds The Andrew Center. Partner denominations include the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. A New Life council will act as a think tank on Anabaptist approaches to evangelism and church growth, provide an opportunity for networking and may develop its own outreach ministries.

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Anne Beiler, founder and president of Auntie Anne's Pretzels, spoke at the Mennonite Economic Development Associates convention Nov. 7, 1997, in Kansas City, Mo. Beiler, who has seen her business go from $1 million in sales in 1990 to over $150 million this year, said she couldn't take credit for the success of her business. Rather, she said, "God had a plan. I had no capital, no business experience, but God was faithful." People cautioned her early on not to mix her faith and business. "But since I took God everywhere else I went, I took God with me to work," she said, adding that "God wants us to be a witness in how we walk and talk." Today some of the profits from Auntie Anne's Pretzels are used to support a variety of charities. ***MEDA***

Bluffton (Ohio) College will offer a course on religious communication to help students think critically about how Christians use religious language in sermons and liturgies, mission and service, business meetings and public relations. The course was developed by Gerald Biesecker-Mast, assistant professor of communication at the college.

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South Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church is the second Mennonite church in Canada to become a "publicly affirming" congregation in the Supportive Congregations Network. They accept homosexual members, whether celibate or in a covenant relationship. The other publicly affirming Canadian congregation is Olive Branch Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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The board of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., at a Nov. 13-15, 1997, meeting in Phoenix, grappled with the issue of where the seminary fits in the structure of an integrated Mennonite Church. Board members affirmed a proposal that AMBS have strong ties to both the leadership and education boards of the denomination. The AMBS board also approved a new concentration in the Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree. The concentration, Christian Formation, combines the existing concentrations of Christian spirituality and Christian education for people preparing for church work in these specific areas. In other business, the board approved the budget for the 1997-98 fiscal year; accepted the resignation of Marcus G. Smucker, associate professor of pastoral theology; heard reports on the progress of revising the AMBS strategic plan and on the process of completing a self study for the Association of Theological Schools. *Mary E. Klassen*

Mennonites in Congo celebrate unity in Christ

Kinshasa, Congo (MCC)—A birthday party of sorts brought together 500 Mennonites on a humid Sunday afternoon here in the former Zaire, as the National Inter-Mennonite Committee (CONIM) celebrated 10 years of existence on Nov. 23, 1997.

CONIM brings together Congo's three Mennonite conferences: CEFMC (Mennonite Brethren), CEM (Evangelical Mennonites), and CMCo (Mennonites). Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has also been a member of CONIM since its beginning in December 1987. CONIM's current head is Roussel Kumakamba of the CMCo.

Bruce Campbell-Janz

Source of strength: *Carrying a basin of cassava on her head, a woman returns from her fields in Bandundu, Congo. Most of Congo's 180,000 Mennonites live as subsistence farmers, and women grow 80 percent of the food.*

Current estimates put the numbers of Mennonites in Congo at about 180,000, second only to the United States. The vast majority of Mennonites in Congo live in rural areas of Bandundu, West Kasai and East Kasai provinces. Only slightly more than 5 percent—some 10,000 Mennonites—live in Kinshasa, a city of about 6 million.

The day's theme was unity and the future. Six different choirs sang in four different languages, showing the great diversity within the unity of the three Mennonite conferences.

While this unity service took place in Kinshasa, other similar services were held throughout the country.

The service focused on CONIM's past, on its efforts to spread Anabaptist teachings on peace and nonviolence and its coordinating work with the three Mennonite conferences.

One exciting recent event was CONIM's coordination of the Great Lakes Project. This project brought together seven partners—CEFMC, CEM, CMCo, MCC, Mennonite Action Group (consisting of Congolese Mennonite businesspeople), Mennonite Brethren Mission/Services and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission—to send a Congolese missionary couple to Bukavu, eastern Congo, in July 1997 to pastor a new Mennonite church there. When the missionaries arrived, they found a vibrant fellowship group with 10 people waiting to be baptized. (See *The Mennonite*, Nov. 11, 1997, page 13.)

What do Mennonites in Congo, unified in CONIM, have to contribute to the world? This was the challenging question asked by Nzash Lumeya of the CEFMC and director of the International Missiology Center in Kinshasa. He urged the congregation to thank God for the past but also ask what should be done today.

"When we are united—one—we cannot be divided. You cannot divide one," said Lumeya. However, he encouraged the gathering to avoid the danger of "one" becoming an exclusive club rather than a source of strength to reach out to others.

The day was also meant to help raise funds for CONIM's annual budget. Congo is going through difficult economic times, and some voiced concern that CONIM continue to receive the funding it needs to carry on its important work. Final figures were not yet available on funds raised in Kinshasa.

People left the service with the fire of unity burning for others to see. Mennonites in Kinshasa are already proposing another inter-Mennonite meeting be held Jan. 25, 1998, which has been declared "World Fellowship Sunday" by Mennonite World Conference. *Bruce Campbell-Janz*

Art exhibit brings together both sides of war

Nairobi (MCC)—On Nov. 5, 1997, the lobby of the Inter-Continental Hotel here was festooned with bright, original Sudanese art. While the venue was not particularly unique, the occasion definitely was.

Sudanese Artists for Peace staged the exhibit during the fifth official round of peace negotiations between Sudan's People's Liberation Movement and the Sudanese government, held Oct. 29-Nov. 11, elsewhere in Nairobi. Taking time out from the talks, representatives of Sudan's warring factions browsed through the art exhibit, which offered a non-threatening, congenial way to meet.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) played a small part in the exhibit's genesis. Former MCC worker Keith Miller taught art in Sudan at a school for people with disabilities, and Bill Bauman worked with craftspeople in Kenya. The two became acquainted with Sudanese artists who, working under the wary eye of an Islamic government, had developed carefully circumscribed art styles.

Sudanese art is known for its bright desert colors, mixture of religious and cultural symbols, and outlines of people in swaddled clothing. Lacking supplies, the artists had creatively incorporated shoe polish, toothpaste and varnish, among other materials, into their work. MCC workers with an appreciative eye for Sudanese art's unique character provided access to art supplies and the wider world of artistic expression.

Eventually a small group of these Sudanese artists settled in Nairobi, partly to escape conscription into the armed services, partly to enjoy greater artistic freedom. With ready access to Nairobi's large diplomatic community, the Sudanese had astonishing success. Several attracted world-class prices for their work.

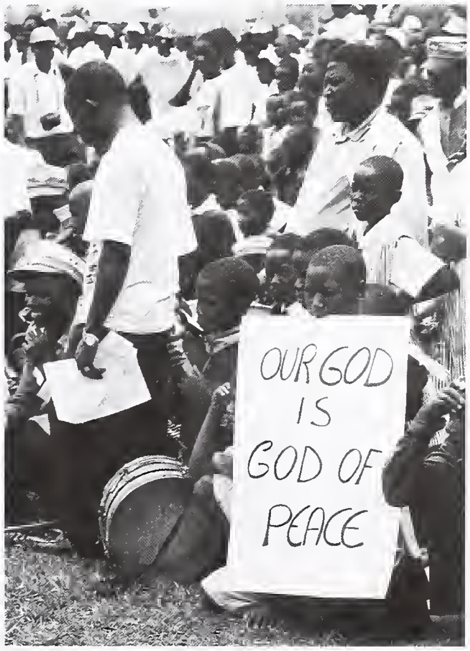
Together with many other Sudanese, the artists also nursed uneasiness about official policies, including their government's pursuit of the continuing civil war.

When peace talks were announced, the artists proclaimed themselves "Sudanese Artists for Peace," and seven of them arranged the exhibit in collaboration with the Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi. SWAN comprises women from both southern and northern Sudan, Muslims and Christians who are involved in self-help activities and engage in various charitable activities. SWAN's chair is Jamaican-born Dr. Pauline Riak, married to Sudanese professor Isaac Riak, both graduates of Bluffton (Ohio) College.

The one-day, 12-hour exhibit attracted a remarkably diverse crowd and greater-than-expected sales. A portion of the proceeds went to help fund SWAN's work. People from northern and southern Sudan mingled with each other all day during the exhibit.

Sudan's civil war has been fought over the past 40 years with only a 10-year respite. One tired but insightful southern Sudanese once opined that this war is being fought for two reasons: to identify the real issues that underlie the war and to identify the real leaders of Sudan. Meanwhile, the armed struggle continues.

Thus far the peace talks have proven inconclusive, but the two sides agreed to launch another round of negotiations this April. In more ways than one, the Sudanese Artists for Peace exhibit provided one of the few bright spots in an otherwise bleak, tragic conflict. *From reports by MCC workers in Nairobi*



Dave Klassen

Bright spot: *These Ugandans are participating in a "prayer for peace" really that took place in their country Nov. 2, 1997. Artists in Sudan staged an "exhibit for peace" on Nov. 5.*

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center is offering mediation skills training for those interested in conflict management, both in church and community settings. Dates and locations are May 4-8, Portland, Ore.; Aug. 10-14, Chicago area; Nov. 16-20, Dallas, Texas, area. For information contact LMPC, 1263 S. Highland Ave., Suite 1N, Lombard, IL 60148-4527; (630) 627-0507.

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The Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference summer delegate assembly will be June 26-27, somewhere in southern California. The theme for the event is, "What difference does the Bible make?" with speaker James Brenneman, pastor at Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church. For information contact Jeff Wright at (909) 980-8002, or e-mail wrightstuff@compuserve.com.

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Ten peace evangelists, jointly sponsored by the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Home Ministries and the Mennonite Church, will be commissioned for service in early 1998. The purpose of the peace evangelists is to encourage Mennonite congregations to link peace and evangelism together, to become passionate about peacemaking and to see peacemaking as a way of life, more than simply refusing military service. The peace evangelists are Addie and Michael Banks, Bronx, N.Y.; Ray and Marilyn Houser Hamm, Altona, Man.; Lawrence Hart, Clinton, Okla.; Jonathan Larson, Atlanta; Bek Linsenmeyer, Inman, Kan.; Gilberto Perez Jr., Aibonito, Puerto Rico; Luzdy Stucky, Tucson, Ariz., and Derek Suderman, Waterloo, Ont. To schedule the peace evangelists, contact Susan Mark Landis, Peace Evangelist Program Coordinator, P.O. Box 173, Orrville, OH 44667-0173, (330) 683-6844, e-mail smlandis@aol.com. *Cynthia Snider*

East Zorra (Ont.) Mennonite Church celebrated its 160th anniversary last September with worship services and dedication of a new education wing. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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Christian Peacemaker Teams' "Peacemaker Congress IV" will be Sept. 24-27, near North Manchester, Ind. Keynote speaker Ched Myers, Los Angeles, will speak on Jesus and the biblical Jubilee. For more information contact CPT at (312) 455-1199, e-mail CPT@igc.org; or New Call to Peacemaking at (717) 859-1958, e-mail jkstoner@ptd.net.

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John Nickel, a music teacher at Mennonite Educational Institute, Clearbrook, B.C., was terminated after admitting to a sexual relationship with a minor, a former MEI student. There have been no charges, and the police are not involved, says school principal Leo Regehr. A news release states that Nickel has asked for forgiveness from God and has undergone several years of counseling. (*ChristianWeek*)

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Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., invites applications for the Church Leadership Award scholarship program for the 1998-99 academic year. The scholarship assists students who demonstrate strong potential for serving in leadership roles in the church. Applicants must be members of a congregation in the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church or related Mennonite group. The award provides a full-tuition scholarship to one incoming student each year in the Master of Divinity program. Applications must be received by March 15 for the 1998-99 academic year. To apply, contact Andrew Kreider, AMBS financial aid officer, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999; 1-800-964-2627; admissions@ambs.edu.

COMMENTARY

When a racism video becomes evangelistic

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—The note at the bottom of my stack of phone messages read, "Wants information about 'Free Indeed' videos."

Since the video was released in 1995, its examination of white privilege and racism has gained a wide-ranging audience. With more than 500 copies purchased in some 40 states, follow-up calls from surprising places come in regularly. (I'm still waiting to hear more from one intriguing purchaser, the International Camel Breeders Association.)

As I returned the call, it quickly became evident this was no ordinary request—she had phoned from the Western State Correctional facility. As we wrapped up our conversation, I couldn't resist asking, "How did 'Free Indeed' end up in a correctional facility?"

She connected me with the facility's affirmative action officer. The officer told me he had seen the video at a local civic group meeting. He had been deeply impressed with it and became eager to use it in his training program at the prison.

"It has lit a fire here. I don't know of any other video that talks about white privilege so powerfully," he said.

I thanked him and, before hanging up, offered the resources of our Racism Awareness Program.

His were welcome words. But the story doesn't stop there. It continues in ways both disturbing and profound.

Two days later, the officer called me back to order two more copies of the video. Then he said, "I have one more question. Are there any Mennonite churches here in ... ?"

As I looked up the answer to his question in the *Mennonite Yearbook*, I asked, "Why do you want to know?"

His answer startled me: "I want to be a part of a denomination that produces resources like this."

Knowing what intense, difficult struggles are under way in our denominations' organizations and congregations as we seek to begin the process of dismantling racism, I threw out a few disclaimers. "What you see in this video is not where all our congregations are. You might be disappointed."

But he was adamant. He had found something meaningful that sprang from an unapologetic belief in Jesus and had affected him deeply. He wanted to know more.

I gave him the local pastor's name and number and told him I would let the pastor know he would be calling. I wished him blessing as he contacted this new congregation.

Our conversation was profound. Working to dismantle racism, challenging the system of white privilege, answering Jesus' call to name this demon among us is the work of the church. It builds God's body. While I had known this in my head, I had not fully realized it would affect real people, real faith, real congregations.

But the exchange was also disturbing. Will our churches, our institutions, our colleges be places where people like this caller are truly welcomed? Will every one of us, of every color, race, ethnicity and gender be welcomed and included in all our congregations?

I don't know what happened, is happening, will happen with this caller and the congregation he planned to contact. I may find out someday. Meanwhile, I pray he will be welcomed.

I pray that racism be truly dismantled in our churches. I pray he and the congregation he connects with will become truly free indeed. *Tobin Miller Shearer, Mennonite Central Committee U.S.*

Delphine Martin/MDS

Free indeed: *Wornice McDonald and Rev. Bob Hansen of St. Olaf Lutheran Church, Detroit, celebrate Communion, marking the efforts of homeowners, Mennonite Disaster Service and local volunteers to repair storm-damaged homes.*

Record

GC—General Conference Mennonite Church
MC—Mennonite Church
MCC—Mennonite Central Committee
MDS—Mennonite Disaster Service
YES—Youth Evangelism Service of Eastern Mennonite Missions

MINISTERS

Nanette M. Beyler is assistant campus pastor at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

Correction: Menno Epp will retire as lead pastor at Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church June 15.

Ralph Foote was licensed and installed as pastor at Carlock (Ill.) Church Sept. 21.

Patty Friesen and **Patrick Preheim** were installed as pastors at Faith Church, Minneapolis, Nov. 23.

Susan Janzen is student minister at First Church, Nappanee, Ind.

Glenn Klassen is pastor at Grace Community Mennonite Church, Chicago.

Michelle Krehbiel has resigned as assistant and youth pastor at First Church, Hutchinson, Kan.

Susan and **Tim Gotwals Lehman** were installed as pastors at Jubilee Church, West Liberty, Ohio, Nov. 2.

Richard Lichty, interim pastor at Germantown Church, Philadelphia, has been called to a three-year term at the church beginning in January.

Florence and **Weldon Schloneger** are ending as pastors at Meadows (Ill.) Church and will be co-pastors at First Church, Beatrice, Neb., beginning in mid-February.

Gordon Scoville is interim pastor at Salem Church, Freeman, S.D.

Thinagar Sitther was ordained as pastor at Bethel Church, Hammon, Okla., Dec. 14.

Ge Yang was licensed Dec. 9 as pastor at First Hmong Church, Kitchener, Ont.

continued on next page

Mannheim Mennonite Church, Petersburg, Ont., experienced a dramatic increase in giving due to one woman's challenge to the church. Over the past five years giving to the church had declined by 18 percent and the church was unable to budget for anything beyond its own needs. A balanced budget needed an 11 percent increase, which seemed unattainable. A council member placed a check on the table representing her family's decision to increase its giving by 11 percent. She then challenged church council members to do the same and to challenge the rest of the congregation to follow suit. As a result, giving increased more than 11 percent. The last fiscal year at Mannheim had a balance of $10,000 above the increased budget. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

Meet a banker ...

Stories from the Old Testament are now available in Low German on audiocassette. The set of 12 tapes, "Biblische Geschichten auf Plattdeutsch," is available for $5 from Faith and Life Communications, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2J1. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

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Mexico City Mennonites and Mennonite Central Committee will help the village of Pluma Hidalgo recover from the effects of Hurricane Pauline Oct. 10, 1997. Volunteers will help with coffee harvesting, replanting trees and coffee bushes, and providing money for food and transportation. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)

* * *

The United Church of Christ voted July 5, 1997, to join with three other U.S. Protestant denominations. The UCC, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church will share congregations and ministers, but continue to be known by their own names. (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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Patrick Henry Talbert and Norman E. Lower of the Florida-based Greater Ministries International were recently charged with 42 counts of racketeering, fraud and related charges. The charges stem from an investigation by Florida law enforcement agencies. Greater Ministries is said to target Mennonites and Amish to invest in their pyramid scheme called "Faith Promises." (*Gospel Herald*)

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Mennonite World Conference has designated Jan. 25 as World Fellowship Sunday, in celebration of the first Anabaptist baptism, which took place on Jan. 25, 1525, in Zurich, Switzerland. For an "idea sheet, "contact MWC, 421 S. Second St., Suite 600, Elkhart, IN 46516-3243.

WORKERS

Nadia Aguilera, Amor Viviente Church, Miami, is beginning a one-year MCC term in Miami as an intern.

Danny Begaye, New Creation Fellowship, Newton, Kan., is beginning a one-year MCC term in Newton as a service intern.

Curt Bueckert, Zoar Church, Langham, Sask., is beginning a two-year MCC term in Washington as a program activities director.

Sarah Buhler, Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year MCC term in Winnipeg as a volunteer coordinator.

Ken and **Marion Dueck**, Zion Church, Swift Current, Sask., began one-year MCC terms in August in Seminole, Texas, Ken as a teacher and Marion as unit coordinator.

Anne Froese, Steinbach (Man.) Church, began a three-year MCC term in Steinbach as an office/bookstore manager.

Carla Hunt, Emmanuel Church, Reinholds, Pa., is assistant coordinator of MDS.

Jae Kauffman, Portland (Ore.) Church, is beginning a three-year MCC term in Portland as coordinator of Portland Learning Outreach and Worship.

J. Michael Keller, Hesston, Kan., has been named controller at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Carol Kornelsen, Riverton, Man., is beginning a two-year MCC term in Riverton as co-manager of the Riverton Thrift shop.

Norm and **Phyllis Lind**, Grants Pass (Ore.) Church, are beginning two-year MCC terms in Winnipeg as maintenance workers at the MCC Canada office.

Elizabeth Raid Pankratz, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., is ending as part-time children's editor for Faith & Life Press to be co-coordinator for the joint MC/GC denominational assembly in St. Louis in 1999.

Mark Pankratz, Hesston, Kan., is maintenance director at Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich. He replaces **Duane Gundy**, who served at the camp for 12 years.

Tom Smucker, Oak Grove Church, Smithville, Ohio, will be executive coordinator of MDS in April. He replaces **Lowell Detweiler**.

Jeanette Unger, Hope Church, Winnipeg, is beginning a one-year MCC term in Winnipeg as a volunteer coordinator.

Jodi Unruh, Goessel (Kan.) Church, is finance assistant for Faith & Life Press, Newton, Kan.

Heather Vander Leeuw, Deep Run West Church, Perkasie, Pa., began a four-month (January to April) YES assignment to Kenya.

Jessica Wiebe, Emmanuel Church, Winkler, Man., began a four-month (January to April) YES assignment to Kenya.

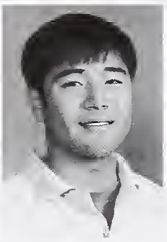
Begaye

Bueckert

Buhler

Froese

Hunt


Kauffman

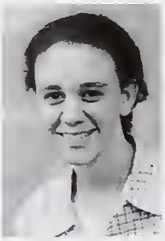
Keller

Raid Pankratz

Smucker

Detweiler

Unruh


Vander Leeuw

Wiebe

Bethel College, a private, liberal arts, undergraduate college, affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church and accredited by the North Central Association, invites applications and nominations for the positions described below. The college's distinctive emphases include peacemaking and voluntary service, global awareness and personal discipleship rooted in free conviction and commitment to Christian community.

Department of nursing chair: The nursing program is NLN-accredited with 200 students. Faculty have opportunities in administration, teaching, research and practice. Qualifications: Doctorate required, Ph.D. in nursing preferred, MSN required. Eligible for licensure in the state of Kansas. Successful administrative and accreditation experience. Demonstrated scholarly and professional activities. Significant experience in baccalaureate education. Demonstrated ability to support the central values of the college: scholarship, service, discipleship and integrity.

Accounting: Permanent faculty member to teach undergraduate accounting courses starting mid-August 1998. Course load supports both accounting and business majors. Desired qualifications include CPA/MBA or doctorate. Professional experience is necessary. Commitment to undergraduate education and advising, interdisciplinary collaboration and Bethel's mission as a church-related college are valued.

Education: Full-time, tenure-track position in education beginning August 1998. Rank and salary dependent on qualifications. Master's considered; doctorate preferred. Candidate must hold an advanced degree in elementary education; evidence of effective teaching crucial and undergraduate-level teaching preferred. Responsibilities include teaching courses in foundation, curriculum methods, classroom management and educational research as well as placement and supervision of student teachers.

Communication: Mass media faculty position includes teaching communication theory and mass communication history, basic print and broadcast reporting, print design and computer-assisted layout, audio and video production and editing. The faculty member also serves as adviser to the campus newspaper, the campus radio station, a video yearbook and an annual magazine. Additional responsibilities may include teaching and advising first-year students in the college's Principles of Communication course and serving as assistant coach of the competitive forensics team.

Bethel is an EO/AA employer; women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Send letter of application and vita to **Dr. John Sheriff, Academic Dean, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117**. Review of applications will begin Feb. 2 for these positions and will continue until the positions are filled. **www.bethelks.edu**

Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, is seeking a **senior pastor** for our congregation. This position will become available in June. Preferred qualifications include: previous pastoral experience; recognized seminary training; a strong vision for evangelical outreach amid our cross-cultural community; good leadership skills, inspired to edify the body of Christ; English as primary language, with understanding of German appreciated.

Please forward resume to **Pastoral Search Committee, Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, 7155 Sherbrooke St., Vancouver, BC V5X 4E3; fax (604) 321-3933.**

Director of M2 program: Half-time position available April 1. Director of M2 program located in Newton, Kan., working with prisoners in Hutchinson (Kan.) Correctional Facility. Position includes promoting M2 program, recruiting M2 volunteers, interviewing and screening inmates, preparing visitation schedules and supervising five M2 visitation evenings a month plus one evening orientation every other month. Salary: $12,500. Person needs administrative skills and ability to work with volunteers, prisoners and administrative personnel at the prison facility.

Interested people should send resumes with professional and personal references, addresses and phone numbers, **by Jan. 31**, to **Offender/Victim Ministries, 900 N. Poplar, Newton, KS 67114**; fax **(316) 283-2039**; e-mail **ovm@southwind.net**.

Im Chhieng (right) and her neighbors in impoverished Mesang district, Cambodia, operate a bank—a rice bank.

MCC helped them construct a warehouse, provided start-up rice and taught bookkeeping. When villagers run low on food—typically just before harvest—they can borrow rice from the bank. After harvest, they return the rice, plus some extra to sustain the bank.

"I'm so happy with this system," says MCC partner Im Chhieng, pictured here with daughter, Rie Auk, collecting several sacks of rice. The rice bank helps keep Cambodian villagers fed and out of debt.

Mennonite
Central
Committee

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

Missions minister—Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference: Responsibilities are promoting mission through congregational resources for evangelism and outreach, church planting, and mission and service opportunities. Qualifications include: ordained minister with pastoral experience, desired experience in church planting and multicultural situations, supportive of the dual-conference relationship of PNMC.

Contact **Patricia Hershberger, 2380 Miller Farm Road, Woodburn, OR 97071; (503) 982-6821.**

Director of operations for **Frederick Mennonite Community,** a CCRC located in Montgomery County, Pa. Responsible for daily operation of the long-term care, assisted living and independent living units, assisting in budgeting, long-range planning and other projects as needed. A current NHA license is required.

Please send resume and salary requirements to **HR Manager, P.O. Box 498, Frederick, PA 19435**; fax **(610) 754-6475.**

Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., welcomes interested applicants for the position of **associate pastor/youth and young adults.** The successful applicant should be a loyal follower of Christ who embraces Mennonite/Anabaptist theology. The position calls for a person who has at least three years experience in pastoral ministry. Abilities in leadership, program administration, teaching, teamwork and motivation are considered essential. Skills in communication, relationship-building and nurturing will also be called for, especially in relation to the 15 to 30 age group.

The associate pastor will have primary responsibility for the overseeing and leadership of the youth program and will also provide leadership for preteens and in relating with young adults. Emmanuel is a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Starting date for this position is **July 1.**

Applicants may address their resumes to **Search Committee, Emmanuel Mennonite Church, 3471 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 6A9; fax (604) 854-8005.**

Altona Mennonite Church, Altona, Man., a General Conference congregation of 100+ members, seeks a full-time **pastor** to begin serving as early as summer 1998. Desired qualifications: solid theological knowledge and training, a commitment to Anabaptist beliefs, previous pastoral experience, teaching and preaching gifts, and a good facilitator with the ability to relate to a wide range of people.

Applications and resumes may be sent to **David Campbell, Pastoral Search Committee Chair, Box 1584, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; (204) 324-8271.**

Hinkletown Mennonite School invites applicants for the position of **administrator** starting July 1998. Qualifications include master's degree and at least six years of successful administrative and/or teaching experience. Training in school administration and possession of teaching certificate preferred. HMS serves 200 students in grades K-8 in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. For more information about the school, you may visit the student-produced web site at **http://home.ptdprolog.net/~hmsstaff.**

Please send resume to **Jim Shenk, 37 Third St., Akron, PA 17501,** by **March 1.**

Service Adventure leaders needed for 1998-99 season. Service Adventure, an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2-month service-learning program for young adults ages 17 to 20, needs qualified leaders. Leadership experience, interest in young adults, spiritual discernment and conflict resolution skills are desired. Two-year term. Accepting applications now for terms beginning fall 1998.

Contact **Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, (219) 294-7523,** e-mail **Kent@mbm.org.**

First Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan., a medium, active congregation serving a small-town community, seeks a full-time **pastor** with a commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and a vision for outreach. Experience in leadership and administration beneficial.

Applicants are invited to submit resume and request for information to **Jim Gehring, Pastoral Search Chair, Box 195, Moundridge, KS 67107; (316) 345-8605.**

Summer School

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June 1-12

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Ruth Lesher, Ph.D., clinical psychologist, Lancaster, Pa.
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Marcus G. Smucker, Ph.D., AMBS
Foundations of Old Testament Exposition: Hebrew Prophets
Perry Yoder, Ph.D., AMBS
(Course begins May 26)

June 15-26

Luke-Acts: Biblical Foundations for Mission
Mary H. Schertz, Ph.D., AMBS
Clergy Ethics
Joe Kotva, Jr., Ph.D., pastor, Allentown, Pa.
Aging and Pastoral Care
David Brunner, D.Min., chaplain, Goshen, Ind.
Anabaptist History and Theology
Arnold Snyder, Ph.D., Conrad Grebel College
Karl Koop, Ph.D. cand., AMBS

June 26-July 3

Conflict, Communication, Conciliation
John Paul Lederach, Ph.D., Eastern Mennonite University

July 24-30

Creation and Spiritual Renewal
Perry Yoder, Ph.D., AMBS
Includes canoe trip in boundary waters.

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Reviews

FILMS

UNCOVERING THE STORY

Amistad, *written by David Franzoni, produced by Steven Spielberg and Debbie Allen, directed by Steven Spielberg, rated R*

Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editor

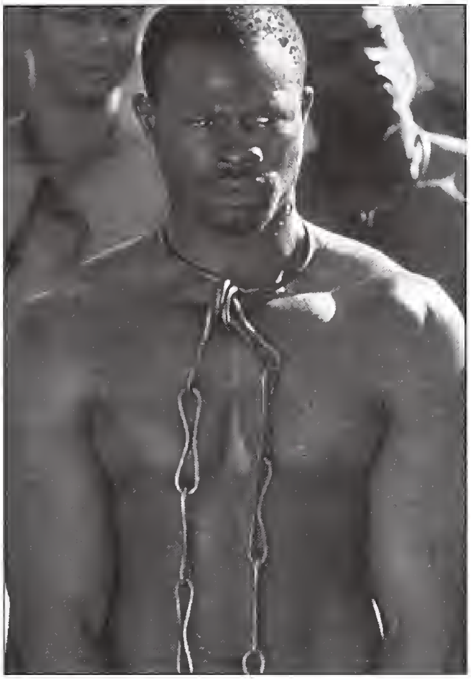
In 1839, 44 slaves on a Spanish ship, "La Amistad," broke free of their chains and killed all but two of the crew. Later, a U.S. ship picked them up and brought them to this country, where the Africans were imprisoned. The slaves came to court in New Haven, Conn., then later to another trial before the U.S. Supreme Court.

This powerful film dramatizes these events, which most U.S. history textbooks completely ignore. Steven Spielberg brings to this movie the compelling, storytelling genius of his film *Schindler's List*. Like that earlier, award-winning work, this one contains depictions of brutality that are difficult to watch yet communicate better than any textbook the horrible treatment of Africans on slave ships.

The central character is the West African slave Cinque (Djimon Hounsou). His pride and bewilderment at being put in chains reveal the freedom that slavery denied to millions of people with dark skin. Hounsou's performance is outstanding. Without his strong, nuanced portrayal of Cinque, the film would have fallen flat.

In one prison scene a fellow African shows Cinque a Bible given him by an abolitionist. Without knowing the words, the man uses the illustrations in the Bible to uncover the story of Jesus coming to bring freedom to people. Here is one of the best presentations of the gospel in a major Hollywood film.

Amistad shows brutal and graphic violence, yet in doing so it reveals some of the truth of what slaves experienced. With that warning, it can serve as an important corrective to the usual study of U.S. history.



Newsweek

A story ignored: *Djimon Hounsou as Cinque, a slave struggling for freedom*

BOOKS

ART AND SCIENCE

A Speck in the Universe: The Bible on Self-Esteem and Peer Pressure, *by Steve Ropp (Faith & Life Press Generation Why series, 40 pages, $14.95 U.S./$20.50 Cdn.)*; **Living Beyond Our Means: The Extravagance of Biblical Stewardship**, *by Carol Duerksen (Faith & Life Press Generation Why series, 36 pages, $12.95 U.S./$17.75 Cdn.)*

Reviewed by Ed Zuercher, Phoenix

Is teaching an art or a science? Good teachers will tell you that good teaching is both art and science. The Generation Why series uses sound pedagogical science to give the lessons structure, which then frees the authors' artistry.

Steve Ropp takes on the formidable task of writing a series of lessons on self-esteem. But rather than giving a course in the syrupy drivel of shallow self-congratulation that so often passes for esteem-building today, Ropp focuses students biblically with a variety of characters stretching from Samson to Mary. It is not what we accomplish or who we are that makes us valuable, he says, but rather whose we are and what we do in response to that knowledge. With creative lesson ideas ranging from M&M games to hiding out in boiler rooms, Ropp brings home the message that we can find self-worth in being faithful, and that faithfulness can give youth (or any of us, for that matter) the strength to make it in an unfriendly world.

Carol Duerksen turns her artistry on the difficult subject of stewardship. Youth are often overlooked in church discussions of stewardship because adults often associate stewardship with money (which youth don't have a whole lot of at that point in their lives). But, as Duerksen points out, stewardship is really about taking risks to share whatever it is that God has given us. What better lesson can we teach young people, who are at the initial point of discovering the gifts God has given them?

Of the two, Duerksen's comes across as a shade thinner, with fewer options and one fewer lesson than Ropp's. Both books, however, demonstrate an artist's sense of teaching, with activities that can capture the imagination of a wide variety of youth. I tried lessons from both with my youth group, and they were enthusiastically received.

These two writers have artfully constructed 13 weeks worth of lessons for youth that should generate plenty of Sunday school dialogue.

WOMEN'S CONSCIENCE

Women Against the Good War: Conscientious Objection and Gender on the American Home Front, 1941-1947, *by Rachel Waltner Goossen. (University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 180 pages, $15.95 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Steve Nolt, South Bend, Ind.

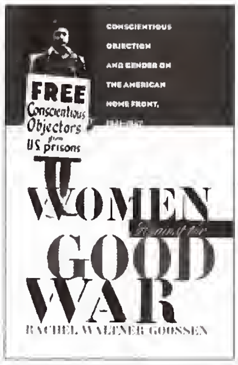
Stories of conscientious objection to participation in war abound in Mennonite family lore. They have shaped Mennonite commitments and ethics, and have helped pass on the faith to succeeding generations.

In author Rachel Waltner Goossen's own family, accounts of her great-uncle's experience in World War I left lasting impressions. But, she wondered, were all the stories of conscientious objection men's stories? Where were the women in and around these well-worn C.O. tales? How did women express their wartime peace convictions in a society that drafted

continued on next page

only male citizens?

In this well-written volume, Goossen recovers the stories of women's conscientious objection during World War II. Using historical documents, photographs, letters and 180 questionnaire and oral history interviews, she explores the role of women who were in some way involved with the U.S. alternative work program known as Civilian Public Service (CPS). Administered primarily by Friends, Brethren and Mennonites, CPS allowed conscientious objectors—principally members of these historic peace churches—to perform "work of national importance" under civilian direction in lieu of military conscription.


CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION AND GENDER ON THE AMERICAN HOME FRONT,
FREE Conscientious Objectors from US prisons
WOMEN
Against the
GOOD WAR
RACHEL WALTNER GOOSSEN

Although the book deals with all women connected to CPS, it particularly draws on Mennonite women's experiences and will appeal to a wide range of Mennonite readers.

The book examines topics such as women's experiences as pacifists in a home front focused on support for a popular war. Other chapters deal with wives and girlfriends who moved near CPS camps and sought employment to support their families, and with the experience of women CPS staff, such as nurses and dietitians.

The book also details the story of so-called "C.O. Girls" who, although not subject to the draft, formed women's CPS units as an expression of their pacifist convictions and helped staff state psychiatric hospitals.

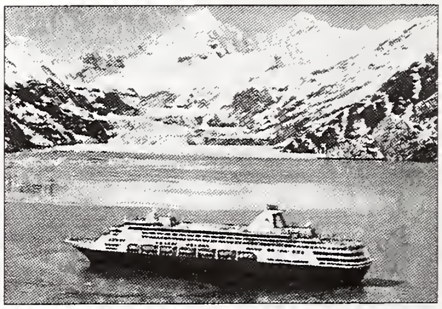
The book concludes with a discussion of how women's C.O. experiences affected their lives in the decades following the war. For most of the women, CPS opened new worlds, broadened horizons and shaped convictions about peace, lifestyle and their role in the church.

I hope this book will receive a wide reading and spark the telling of many more women's C.O. stories in Mennonite families and churches. May these stories become as common as their men's counterparts.

Visit our web site (see page 2).

Resources

- **Leaving Everything Behind** by Bertha Little Coyote and Virginia Giglio (University of Oklahoma Press, 1997, $40 U.S., book and compact disc) contains Bertha's memories and songs of Cheyenne life.
- **I Want to Learn More About Jesus** is a 60-page booklet written for seekers or believers who want to encounter Jesus' life and understand his teaching. It can be used either before or after the companion book **I Have Decided to Follow Jesus**. The book is available from Eastern Mennonite Missions Home Ministries for $3. Call (717) 898-2251.
- **Against the Death Penalty** by Gardner C. Hanks (Herald Press, 1997, $11.99 U.S./$17.25 Cdn.) presents Christian and secular arguments against capital punishment.
- **Faith Dilemmas for Marketplace Christians** by Ben Sprunger, Carol J. Suter and Wally Kroeker (Herald Press, 1997, $7.99 U.S./$11.40 Cdn.) contains 13 ethical dilemmas faced by Christians in the workplace; includes biblical background and questions for discussion.
- **Anabaptist-Mennonites Nationwide USA**, compiled by C. Nelson Hostetter (Masthof Press, 1997, $9.95 U.S. plus $3 shipping), summarizes 46 groups across the United States, with historical background and practices.
- **Parents Passing the Torch of Faith** by John M. Drescher (Herald Press, 1997, $7.99 U.S./$11.40 Cdn.) gives practical ideas for managing family time, priorities, prayer and more as parents pass on their faith to their children.
- **Letting Go ... Moving On** is a Lent/Holy Week/Easter worship and spirituality packet that contains worship ideas, personal prayer and retreat resources. Order for $10 U.S. from Faith & Life Press, 1-800-743-2474; e-mail flp@gcmc.org.
- **Racism study guide** by Tobin (formerly Jody) Miller Shearer is available in print form and on the World Wide Web. The study guide accompanies Shearer's book *Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege Toward Racial Reconciliation* (Herald Press, 1994). To order a print copy, contact Mennonite Central Committee Racism Awareness Program, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; (717) 859-3889; fax (717) 859-3875. Web site is http://www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc/misc/enter-the-river.



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A new day is dawning for Mennonite readers!

Your new magazine, *The Mennonite,* will be a key communication resource for the soon-to-be-integrated Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. Blending the best of *Gospel Herald* and the former *The Mennonite,* the new *The Mennonite* will continue to inspire and encourage readers in their Christian faith.

It will do this through an exciting editorial menu. Each issue will include feature articles focusing on biblical insight, Mennonite issues and trends, and faith stories. You'll also find timely news stories covering the Mennonite church in the U.S. and around the globe.

The Mennonite will also keep you up to date on Mennonite agencies and groups, churchwide events, and missionary activity. Columns and reviews, editorials, and letters from readers will address important topics and issues, augmenting your Christian growth. Watch the final edition of this magazine for more details.

Best of all, as a current *Gospel Herald* or *The Mennonite* subscriber, your subscription to the new *The Mennonite* is automatic. No forms to fill out and no extra fees to pay!

Just like its predecessors, *The Mennonite* will be committed to preparing persons to accept Christ as Savior and Lord.

***The Mennonite* debuts in February 1998. It will be the dawning of a new day in Mennonite readership—and in your Christian life.**

theMennonite

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Editorial

Fork in the road

My friend Gwen and I became Mennonite Central Committee volunteers at about the same time. I went to Harlan, Ky., and Gwen to England. We wrote many long letters.

I saved all her letters, put them in a notebook and gave them back to her. Well, all except one, which I have still. It's full of handwritten excerpts from all kinds of feminist writing she was reading at the time.

I look back over that letter Gwen sent me and say that she became a feminist in England. It is only in the last year that I realize that I became one in MCC, too.

My teachers were women who were my friends when I lived in eastern Kentucky from 1986 to 1993. None of them (well, except maybe for Melissa) would have thought of "feminist" as a word that described them or any philosophy they espoused.

"Feminism" has become a word that makes many of us suspicious, mostly because we don't understand it. To me, the key is "equality"—that the basis of feminism is that women and men are equal and thus deserve equal treatment by society and its institutions. What my friends in Kentucky taught me was the deeper meaning of the word—that we are all created in God's image and that God nowhere intended for half of humanity to be inferior to the other half just because of gender. History consists of hierarchy, but hierarchy comes from sin, not from God.

What finally opened my eyes to how I had been changed was writing the study guide—excerpts of which make up this issue's feature section—for Women in Mission and the Women's Missionary and Service Commission, now united in Mennonite Women. My topic was "Sisterhood." When I began writing down stories of women in Kentucky who had meant a great deal to me, I also began to see what the women in my life, before and since, had taught me.

Small epiphany: That the study guide and this issue of *The Mennonite* should come together when and where they have is one of those small epiphanies that feed my faith. This is my last editorial as assistant editor of *The Mennonite*. It is the last "usual" issue of *The Mennonite* (the Jan. 27 issue, the final one of *The Mennonite* in its "historic" incarnation, will be devoted to closure and to celebrating *The Mennonite*'s 112 years of existence). I had nothing to do with what went into the feature section, except to give my permission. But as I looked over the stories on the first few pages, remembering Hazel and Melissa (and the other women whose stories are in the study guide) with smiles and a few tears, I had to think as well about what I have gained from my time with *The Mennonite*.

Facility with a desktop publishing design program, a mouse and a Mac. Understanding and appreciation for General Conference Mennonite Church polity. The mysteries of photo sizing unraveled. Tips for surviving conferences (e.g., to take a camera—it gives you an excuse to roam at will).

I've learned that there's always a way to make the article fit and always a web address, an 800 number or a quizzical Menno to fit into the stray white space that inevitably pops up somewhere. I've learned that John Hiebert is a genius and Martha Graber gives new—and mellifluous—meaning to patience.

I discovered the undiluted joy of real teamwork. I've been shown that the worst Monday cannot withstand a communication staff coffee break and that there is little a dose of "Dilbert" can't cure. I found I'm not the only one who would like to consign misplaced apostrophes to the deepest pits of hell and that someone else likes to write snide comments in the margins of the *National Weekly Mennonite Catholic Reformed Herald Observer*. I have seen that a real leader cares for himself, with prayer and worship and good literature, as thoughtfully as he cares for his work, and that he will let you try your wings without holding you back—but if you trip, he will still take the fall with you. Sometimes even for you.

I am blessed—to be able to hold in my hands a letter from England, a slender tan-colored booklet, or the last 40 issues of the official organ of the General Conference Mennonite Church, as proof of some of the ways God has poured grace into my life. The ride was too short, as they have mostly been. But I am grateful for the roads I was able to take by following this map. I look in hope to wherever it has pointed me, and our Mennonite denominations. *Melanie A. Zuercher*

Recyclable

Inside

Green shoots of prayer are rising / p. 13

What kind of God do you want your children to believe in? / p. 14

Parting reminders / p. 15

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THE
Mennonite

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

113: 02
JANUARY 27, 1998

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Good-bye!

- An arena of family dialogue (page 3)
- Good times, bad times (page 8)
- Leaving his mark (page 10)

Our final issue

Prologue

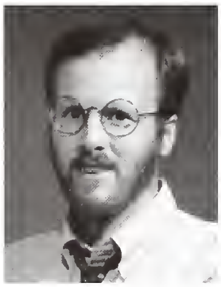
Using magazine parlance, it is time to put this final issue to bed. With some sadness and some pride we bid *The Mennonite* farewell. It's had a long run and served its readers well, though not without its share of typos, misspelled words, inaccurate information and inflammatory opinions. But with the good graces of its readers and by the grace of God, it has also provided encouragement, information, insight and challenge through peaceful and troubled times.

Senior historian Robert Kreider (page 3) provides an overview of the life of this magazine and how its editors have shaped it.

Six of *The Mennonite*'s editors responded to a request to write briefly about the highlights and "lowlights" of their tenures (page 8). Two editors were unable to respond.

Though he was reticent to let us make a big deal about it, we insisted on doing an article about our long-time art director, John Hiebert (page 10). He has made an indelible mark on the magazine.

Each of our regular columnists responded to an invitation to offer a final column (pages 13-15). And Joel Kauffmann provided a special cartoon (page 12).



In about three weeks you should be receiving the first issue of the new *The Mennonite*. Please pray for its staff and help engage its community of readers in dialogue.

Au revoir. *gh*

Next issue: The new *The Mennonite*

Cover: Photo by Marilyn Nolt

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Throughout its 112-year-old history, *The Mennonite* has stimulated discussion and renewed readers' awareness of their part of a larger peoplehood.

8 Good times, bad times

Editors of *The Mennonite* reflect on the joyful and difficult times in their tenures, plus a memorable editorial.

10 Leaving his mark

In his 34 years as art director for *The Mennonite*, John Hiebert has earned the praise of the five editors he has worked with.

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The Mennonite is a member of Associated Church Press, Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse (a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group) and an associate member of Canadian Church Press.

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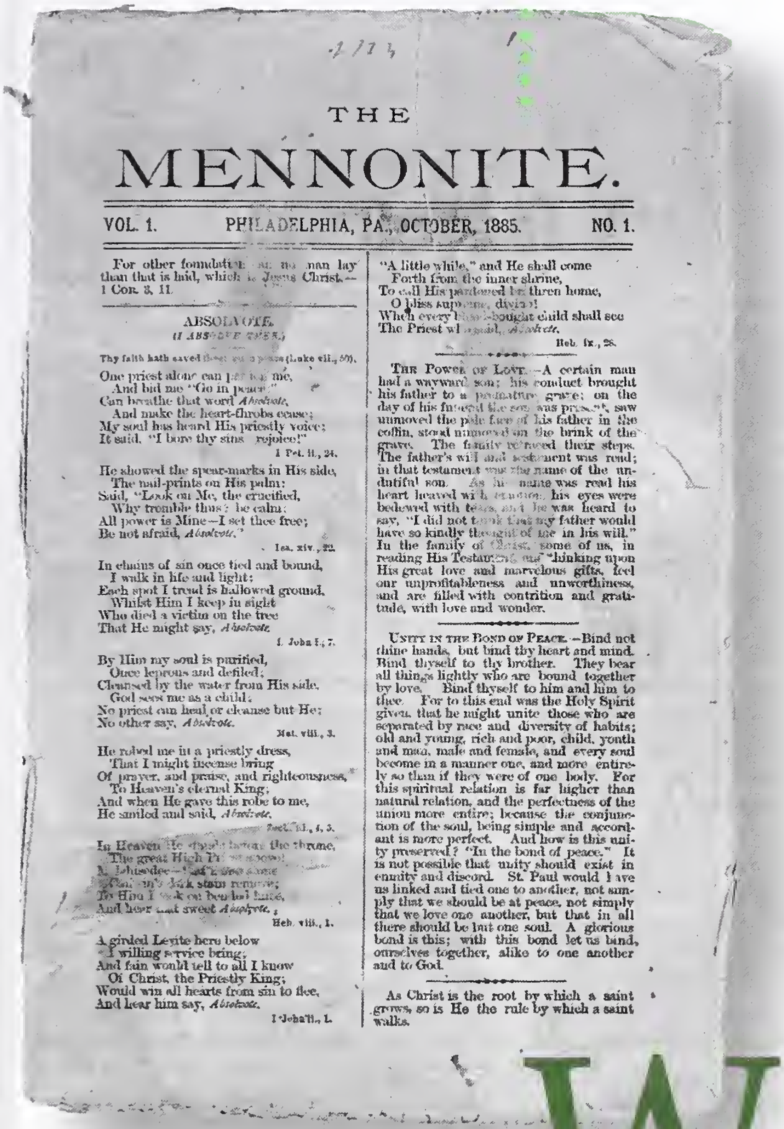
General Conference Mennonite Church



THE

MENNONITE.

VOL. 1. PHILADELPHIA, PA., OCTOBER, 1885. NO. 1.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. 3, 11.

ABSOLVOTE.

(I ABSOLVE THEE.)

Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace (Luke vii., 50).

One priest alone can pardon me,
And bid me "Go in peace;"
Can breathe that word *Absolvote*,
And make the heart-throbs cease;
My soul has heard His priestly voice;
It said, "I bore thy sins—rejoice!"
1 Pet. ii., 24.

He showed the spear-marks in His side,
The nail-prints on His palm:
Said, "Look on Me, the crucified,
Why tremble thus? be calm:
All power is Mine—I set thee free;
Be not afraid, *Absolvote*."
Isa. xiv., 22.

In chains of sin once tied and bound,
I walk in life and light;
Each spot I tread is hallowed ground,
Whilst Him I keep in sight
Who died a victim on the tree
That He might say, *Absolvote*.
I. John i., 7.

By Him my soul is purified,
Once leprous and defiled;
Cleansed by the water from His side,
God sees me as a child;
No priest can heal or cleanse but He;
No other say, *Absolvote*.
Mat. viii., 3.

He robed me in a priestly dress,
That I might incense bring
Of prayer, and praise, and righteousness,
To Heaven's eternal King;
And when He gave this robe to me,
He smiled and said, *Absolvote*.
Zech. iii., 4, 5.

In Heaven He stands before the throne,
The great High Priest above;
Melchisedec—[illegible]
[illegible] dark stain remove;
To Him I look on bended knee,
And hear that sweet *Absolvote*.
Heb. viii., 1.

A girded Levite here below
I willing service bring;
And fain would tell to all I know
Of Christ, the Priestly King;
Would win all hearts from sin to flee,
And hear him say, *Absolvote*.
I John ii., 1.

"A little while," and He shall come
Forth from the inner shrine,
To call His pardoned brethren home,
O bliss supreme, divine!
When every blood-bought child shall see
The Priest who said, *Absolvote*.
Heb. ix., 28.

* * *

THE POWER OF LOVE.—A certain man had a wayward son; his conduct brought his father to a premature grave; on the day of his funeral the son was present, saw unmoved the pale face of his father in the coffin, stood unmoved on the brink of the grave. The family retraced their steps. The father's will and testament was read; in that testament was the name of the undutiful son. As his name was read his heart heaved with emotion, his eyes were bedewed with tears, and he was heard to say, "I did not think that my father would have so kindly thought of me in his will." In the family of Christ, some of us, in reading His Testament, and thinking upon His great love and marvelous gifts, feel our unprofitableness and unworthiness, and are filled with contrition and gratitude, with love and wonder.

* * *

UNITY IN THE BOND OF PEACE.—Bind not thine hands, but bind thy heart and mind. Bind thyself to thy brother. They bear all things lightly who are bound together by love. Bind thyself to him and him to thee. For to this end was the Holy Spirit given, that he might unite those who are separated by race and diversity of habits; old and young, rich and poor, child, youth and man, male and female, and every soul become in a manner one, and more entirely so than if they were of one body. For this spiritual relation is far higher than natural relation, and the perfectness of the union more entire; because the conjunction of the soul, being simple and accordant is more perfect. And how is this unity preserved? "In the bond of peace." It is not possible that unity should exist in enmity and discord. St. Paul would have us linked and tied one to another, not simply that we should be at peace, not simply that we love one another, but that in all there should be but one soul. A glorious bond is this; with this bond let us bind ourselves together, alike to one another and to God.

* * *

As Christ is the root by which a saint grows, so is He the rule by which a saint walks.

An arena of family dialogue

Throughout its 112-year history, The Mennonite has stimulated discussion and renewed readers' awareness of their part of a larger peoplehood.

Robert Kreider

When did you first become aware of *The Mennonite*? I asked that of members of our small group, which meets on Sunday evenings. The week a new issue of *The Mennonite* arrives we each bring our copy to discuss its contents. Invariably we begin with the letters to the editor or the editorial on the back page. *The Mennonite* stimulates discussion and renews our awareness of our part in a larger peoplehood.

From the beginning the editors persuasively advocated Sunday schools, missions, appreciation for the Mennonite heritage, a trained ministry.

The Mennonite

Symbol of Hope

One person recalled that when she was 11 or 12 her mother said, "I think you are old enough now to read *The Mennonite*." A sign of maturity—old enough to enter into the world of adult talk. Another spoke of how, when he was in overseas service with Mennonite Central Committee, he devoured each issue: "It was a link between me and the church at home."

My regular reading of *The Mennonite* began in college. In September 1938, I was leafing through what I thought then were dull, gray pages, when an editorial leaped out, entitled "Is There No Difference?" The editor, J.R. Thierstein, urged readers not to place German Nazism in the same category as Russian Communism. Admitting that the German government had done what "may be … reprehensible," he argued that it did not compare to Soviet atheism and brutality. "In Germany," he wrote, "Christianity is still treated with reverence and respect, while Russia is making every effort to disgrace it and to stamp it out." As the 19-year-old editor of the *Bethel Collegian*, I had the effrontery to write the following week an editorial in the campus paper, "There Is No Difference." In a following issue, Thierstein printed in *The Mennonite* under the heading, "Timely Suggestions," a letter from my father. The editor prefaced the letter, "We are thankful for and glad to bring the following timely letter by our beloved colleague, Professor A. E. Kreider." Included in Dad's letter was the following: "We should refrain from anything that lends our support or endorsement to any of these political systems (communism or fascism). We as a people are called to live in the midst of this generation as peacemakers."

In this youthful encounter with *The Mennonite*, I observed an editor speaking his mind, then receiving a gentle rebuke from a reader (my father), followed by a gracious acknowledgment of a divergent view. I also saw that *The Mennonite* was not the authoritative voice of conference. One could disagree respectfully. *The Mennonite* was, thus, an arena for family dialogue. In recent years, as I read the letters to the editor, I sometimes feel discomfort with letter writers who assume irritably that the church paper is *the* conference papal voice.

Rich heritage: After this issue, *The Mennonite* and the *Gospel Herald* are to live together as one. Each brings unique gifts that should bless the union. *The Mennonite*, now more than 112 years old, comes with a rich heritage of communication. That seems like a long time, yet in the 472 years of Anabaptist-Mennonite history, its life spans only the last quarter of our story. In most of our history Mennonites witnessed, survived and grew without benefit of a church paper. Scattered congregations were linked and nurtured by an informal network of letter writing and visitation, together with the planned itineration of pastors. The visitor from afar was a welcome guest in isolated frontier homes. In this oral society the guest brought news of families and church, thus strengthening a sense of peoplehood.

Church papers arrived at the dawn of the information age. The launching of *The Mennonite* in 1885 was propelled by winds of change among General Conference Mennonites. They were beginning to take their cues from North American Protestantism, which was engaged in an era of institution building: Sunday schools, conferences, headquarters, colleges, missions, publishing programs, revival and temperance movements. Beginning with the creation of a conference structure in 1860, the General Conference followed in these trends: in 1867 the Wadsworth School, in the 1870s a massive intake of Russian immigrants in the prairie states and provinces, in 1880 the mission to the Indians in Oklahoma Territory, and soon thereafter more colleges: Bethel, Bluffton, Freeman and Gretna.

Birth of an idea: The genesis of ideas is fascinating. In 1882 Nathaniel Bertolet Grubb, 32-year-old editor-publisher of the *Schwenksville Item* and associate pastor of Schwenksville (Pa.) Mennonite Church, was called to pastor First Mennonite Church in Philadelphia. Mennonites were moving to the city and were gathering into a vibrantly growing new congregation. Members of his city congregation were speaking English rather than German. Grubb, a recent student at the Wadsworth School in Ohio—the first institution of Mennonite higher learning in North America—was full of ideas.

On Nov. 5, 1884, traveling by train with the highly respected older pastor A.B. Shelly to attend the General Conference session at Berne, Ind., Grubb tested his idea: a monthly English Mennonite paper to be published by the Eastern District Conference. A month later N.B. Grubb met in the home of Isaiah T. Clymer at Quakertown, Pa., with four conference

THE MENNONITE
HEARTBREAK IN THE MIDDLE EAST
The Mennonite
OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST
93:34 SEPTEMBER 26, 1978
Inside this issue:
Young children
The teacher
Are we called for such a time?
To live is Christ

leaders to propose a plan. Their answer: "No." In August 1885 the persistent young pastor discussed his plan with an older pastor, A.M. Fretz. A few weeks later Grubb and Fretz met with William Landis in his home near Quakertown. After a time of prayer they decided to move forward with the publication of the first issue in October 1885 and that it was to be named *The Mennonite.* They would print and circulate 1,000 copies with an annual subscription price of 50 cents. Further, they decided to invite the Eastern District Conference to sponsor the publication. Should the conference decline, they would ask it to permit them to publish the paper as a personal enterprise.

On the masthead the young editor placed this one-sentence mission statement: "A religious monthly journal, devoted to the interest of the Mennonite Church, and the cause of Christ at large." In his first editorial Grubb opened with the words of Jesus as he sent forth the 70: "And into whatsoever house ye enter, Peace be to this house" (Luke 10:5). The new paper was being sent "as a messenger of peace and good will knocking at your doors and asking admission, that it may bring words of peace and comfort to the hearts of Christians, and glad tidings of salvation to those who have yet made peace with their God, Saviour and Judge." He added that *The Mennonite* was particularly addressed to the needs of young people who "are growing away from the church." He continued, "Our great aim ... is to reach the young with religious instruction and forward the mission cause in our church." N.B. Grubb, pastor of a growing city congregation, saw a church paper as essential in nurturing scattered Mennonites who were moving to the cities and migrating west and in reaching beyond to fields of mission.

On the move: As I have surveyed 112 years of *The Mennonite,* I have focused on the comings and the goings of the 16 editors. These transitions have often been moments of insightful reflection on the mission of *The Mennonite.* The first five editors, all pastors, studied at the Wadsworth School in Ohio (1867-1888). Two were European-born: C.H.A. van der Smissen and John R. Thierstein. Two have been women: Mary Becker (Valencia) and Muriel Thiessen Stackley. The first layperson was J.R. Thierstein. The editorial office moved west from Philadelphia to Berne, Ind., in 1902; back to Philadelphia in 1915; to Newton, Kan., in 1937; to Beatrice, Neb., in 1941; to Newton in 1948; to Bluffton, Ohio, in 1950; to Newton in 1961; to Winnipeg in 1971, and back to Newton in 1986. Here is an Abrahamic theme: an editorial presence that has been on the move.

For the first 17 years of its life *The Mennonite,* published by the Eastern District Conference, struggled financially. In 1892, when pastor A.S. Shelly succeeded N.B. Grubb as editor, the circulation was 600. From the beginning the editors persuasively advocated Sunday schools, missions, appreciation for the Mennonite heritage, a trained ministry. A.B. Shelly, chair of the General Conference Mission Board, furnished the paper with a stream of exciting articles on the new mission work in Oklahoma Territory among the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

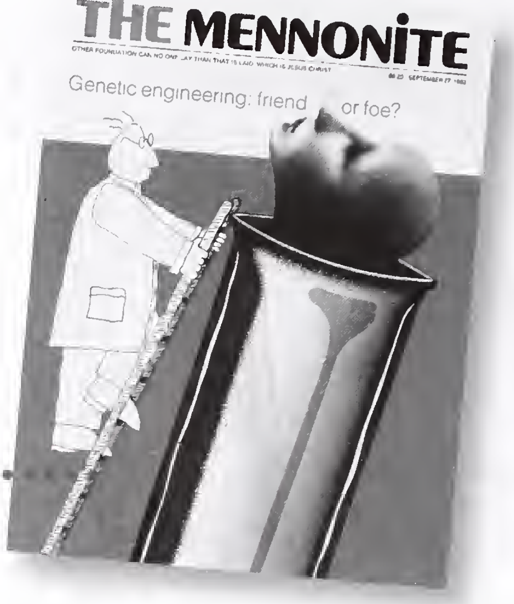
Seeing this Eastern District Conference-sponsored paper as a resource for Mennonites nationwide, in 1902 the General Conference adopted *The Mennonite* as the conference paper. For the first time it appeared weekly with an expanded four-column newspaper format. Selected as the new editor was young pastor Harvey G. Allebach, a 33-year-old graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, whom some called "the best preacher in the Eastern Conference."

Allebach declared his editorial policy to be an "endeavor to present our readers each week with a clean, wholesome, inspiring sheet, full of spiritual reading matter, the ultimate object of which is to be the conversion of souls to Christ and the supplying of nourishing food to those already in Christ."

In the Jan. 2, 1902, issue of the newly formatted *The Mennonite,* N.B. Grubb, the first editor, spoke of the paper he had founded as "a child born of the needs ... of a church in a great city." He said he realized quite early that an English church paper was not only "the need of one congregation [but] of the entire conference." He concluded, "*The Mennonite* has now thoroughly matured, and has gone out from its parental home to enter the wider sphere of usefulness, accompanied with the prayer that ... it may achieve great things for God and His church."

Controversies of the church: Like editors before and following, Allebach begged his readers to seek more subscribers and to contribute news and articles to make *The Mennonite* an arena

The Mennonite was soon plunged into the turbulent waters of an angry era: a televised war in Vietnam, an outburst of protest movements, burning inner cities, outcroppings of a drug culture, assassinations—angst in family, community and church.



of family discussion. In the second issue of January 1902 he wrote, "A good reading public makes a good paper. An enthusiastic reader makes an enthusiastic editor." That issue carried an editorial response to John Horsch's article advocating church-prescribed plain dress. Thus, from its General Conference beginning in 1902, the editor was ready to engage, albeit graciously, in the controversies of the church.

From 1902 to 1915, three more Wadsworth-trained pastors served as editors: H.G. Allebach (1902-1905), I.A. Sommer (1905-1911) and C.H.A. van der Smissen (1912-1914). All spoke of their editorial responsibility as a privilege and a blessing—another theme echoed by subsequent editors. When Sommer became editor he declared it important that readers know about life in sister congregations and thus be able to glean ideas for improvements and change. He invited articles describing "a week of work" in one's congregation.

In 1915 Silas M. Grubb, son of N.B. Grubb and pastor of Second Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, began a 22-year editorship that spanned World War I and the Great Depression. In 1923 a youth page with editor was added. For two Depression years, 1934-36, two papers combined temporarily for reasons of economy: the Central Conference *Christian Evangel* and *The Mennonite*—a foretaste of integration to come.

J.R. Thierstein, retired professor of German at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., assumed the editorship, preferring to call himself an "acting editor." This 70-year-old layperson entered his task with vigor. Stating that *The Mennonite* "does not depend on the editor alone," he listed a dozen ways in which readers could contribute. In support he quoted Goethe's *Faust*: "He who brings much brings something for everybody and each individual returns to his home satisfied." Again a distinguishing characteristic of *The Mennonite*: It is a forum for dialogue. He soon increased the circulation from 1,600 to 2,500.

With Thierstein's unexpected death in May 1941, he was succeeded for six months by Mary Becker, his assistant. Mary Becker (Valencia) later entered a distinguished missionary career in Colombia.

On Nov. 11, 1941, less than a month before Pearl Harbor and U.S. entrance into World War II, Reynhold Weinbrenner, pastor at Beatrice, Neb., began his editorship of *The Mennonite*. In an editorial reflecting on the paper's mission, he asked, "Should not our church papers ... be the continuation of our last conference and the preparation for the next one?" Again, the theme of dialogue.

Wings of prayer: In 1948 another youthful pastor, Jacob Enz, began a brief term as editor, accepting the responsibility with the words of Elisha, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." He invited the reader "to breathe a prayer for *The Mennonite*" on the receipt of each issue. Here is the recurring theme that the paper was carried on the wings of prayer.

In 1950 J.N. Smucker, completing his second term as president of the General Conference, became editor for the decade of the 1950s. He rode into his editorship on the wave of the Every Member Plan, which placed either *The Mennonite* or *Der Bote* in every General Conference home. Circulation for *The Mennonite* surged to 16,500.

This postwar decade witnessed an institutional explosion: the growth of the newly established conference headquarters at Newton, local building programs, establishment of retreat and retirement centers, expansion of overseas mission, growth and diversification of the programs of Mennonite Central Committee and much more. In the late 1950s *The Mennonite* acquired a more sprightly appearance under the design of Robert Regier. In this postwar era a variety of issues emerged in *The Mennonite*: race, the Cold War, the church in the inner city, nuclear weapons, nonregistration for conscription, mental health, television. In the final issue of Smucker's editorship, Erland Waltner, conference president, spoke of the editor as "pastor-at-large" to the people.

Angry era: In 1961, a few weeks before John F. Kennedy was inaugurated U.S. president, Maynard Shelly, pastor of the Allentown (Pa.) Mennonite Church, became editor. *The Mennonite* was soon plunged into the turbulent waters of an angry era: a televised war in Vietnam, an outburst of protest movements, burning inner cities, outcroppings of a drug culture, assassinations—angst in family, community and church. In the opening paragraph of his first editorial, Feb. 21, 1961, Shelly recalled the mission statement on that first issue of October 1885: "Devoted to the interest of the Mennonite church and cause of

Inside
The adolescent male culture / p. 9
The gospel and excuses / p. 11
A gatherer of stories / p. 12
THE Mennonite
Uncle Jesse and Aunt Lydia: a love story (see page 3)
7 strategies for a healthy marriage (see page 6)

The Mennonite *is like a person, a member of the family, who enriches the conversation at the table.*

Christ." He invoked these words to be his intention, hope and prayer.

In one of his last editorials, June 29, 1971, Shelly recalled a contentious time in the life of the General Conference that erupted at the Hutchinson, Kan., conference of 1929. Three emotion-laden issues then were Modernism, wine in Communion, and secret societies. The conference decided by a narrow vote (369 to 320) to investigate its doctrinal soundness, defeated a motion disapproving the use of wine in Communion and debated at length and defeated a motion to censor congregations that made no effort to discipline lodge members. This story led him to affirm *The Mennonite* as an arena to attack issues "with vigor, politeness, if possible, but tolerance always."

On Sept. 7, 1971, the first Canadian to edit *The Mennonite*, Larry Kehler, in his first editorial wrote, "Renewal and reconciliation ... will continue to be major concerns in the pages of *The Mennonite*." He envisioned devoting frequent space to "two primary institutions ... the family and the local congregation." He spoke of his "partiality to Anabaptist concerns ... [a commitment] to giving people with a diversity of opinions a chance to address the brotherhood ... [a concern for] improved inter-Mennonite relations ... [an interest] in internationalizing *The Mennonite* ."

Bernie Wiebe, a fellow Canadian who succeeded Kehler in October 1976, wrote in his first editorial: "It is my fervent prayer that ours will be communication for commitment." During Wiebe's editorship, in the Oct. 22, 1985, issue, *The Mennonite* celebrated its centennial. Editors of other Mennonite periodicals were invited to reflect on the role of *The Mennonite*. Daniel Hertzler of *Gospel Herald* observed that "editing, like pastoral work, is a life that is full of surprises." One of the delights he noted was the launching of Meetinghouse, an association of Mennonite editors. Ron Rempel of *Mennonite Reporter* appreciated "the effort to keep potentially divisive viewpoints in conversation" and the "clear call to the renewal of a holistic faith." David Schellenberg of the *EMC Messenger* spoke of an "openness which attracts and challenges." Harold Jantz, former editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, spoke of the editors' effort "to reconcile factions within conference, to bring the pietistic stream closer to the Anabaptist" and "the personal style of journalism" of *The Mennonite*. Glen A. Pierce of *Evangelical Visitor* wrote appreciatively of "the breadth of topics in lead articles, the top-notch news section, the dialogue in the letters to the editor, the stimulating editorials." Wally Kroeker, former editor of *The Christian Leader*, likened *The Mennonite* to "a main-course chowder, a robust medley of meat, vegetables, broth and seasonings." He added, "As a fellow editor I have envied the broad churchly participation your pages reflect. Yours is not a magazine written by a huddled few."

Holiness and discipleship: In 1986 Wiebe was succeeded by Muriel Thiessen Stackley, who grew up in India, the daughter of missionary parents. In introducing herself, Stackley declared, "My taproot is in India, in General Conference Mennonite missions. I am also grateful to my parents for giving me a grounding in what I understand to be Anabaptism: (1) the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, (2) the necessity that the Bible be my rule for life, (3) a synthesis of the Great Commission (to go) and the Great Commandment (to love), a synthesis of holiness and discipleship and (4) that the Sermon on the Mount is for us, now."

In 1992, when Stackley passed the editorial mantle to Gordon Houser, she presented her successor thus: "You have a new and younger editor who brings to this 107-year-old magazine the freshness of an adult convert to Anabaptism, the literariness of a writer and book lover, the commitment of a Bible scholar, the practicalness of a church member who has planned many worship services, and a close follower of Jesus Christ."

As I dip into pages from each decade of its 112-year-history, I sense that *The Mennonite* is like a person, a member of the family, who enriches the conversation at the table: one who brings us news from our scattered, extended family, one who has an ear to what is happening beyond in an exciting and disturbing wider world, one who tells stories that gladden the heart, one who reminds us of hurts in the community we might ignore, one who at times annoys us, one who has a gift of words, one who joins us in prayer and calls us to an awareness of the unseen Guest, Christ Jesus, whose presence radiates among us.

Robert Kreider, North Newton, Kan., is an editor, historian and a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Good times, bad times

Visions and dreams

In October 1885 Nathaniel Bertolet Grubb had a vision and a dream of the need for a monthly Mennonite publication. Thus *The Mennonite* was born. Today the death knell is sounding after 16 editors have shaped this publication according to their visions and dreams.

As eighth in the list, my name appears, not by selection or choice but by Providence. What were my qualifications? I had no special vision for *The Mennonite* except to continue the one Dr. J.R. Thierstein had imprinted on the 16-page weekly publication. He had unwittingly trained me to become his successor during the five months following his unexpected death. To him I pay tribute for his trust and patience in delegating responsibilities to me as his student assistant.

Others I feel indebted to are A.J. Richert, chair of the Board of Publications, who encouraged me with kind words of appreciation; the typesetters at the Bethel College print shop, who patiently suffered my perfectionist proofreading, and above all God for giving me the opportunity of serving him and my church in time of need. Adios, dear *Mennonite.*

Memorable editorial: "Conscientious in All Things" (July 8, 1941). *Mary Becker Valencia, Bogota, Colombia*

Those days and weeks and years

Just to have the thrill of filling the pages of this grand old magazine was joy enough for me. I got to know the Mennonite family in a special way. Each day's mail, though sometimes fearsome, was part of the give and take to spur us all on the way. Printing all letters, even those some thought not fit to be read, opened doors and windows we forgot were closed. We needed that. My values could not be the only ones being honored.

Joy, of course, is always mixed with sadness. In learning to walk, we stumble and even fall. I knew that an editor needs to be both pastor and prophet, to console and nurture as well as challenge and criticize. I thought I could keep my balance. Yes, I was disappointed when the people who counted some of the votes decided that wasn't happening.

If to be the editor is a joy, not to be brings its own kind of sorrow. But even greater would have been the grief of having missed the chance to take the risk.

Memorable editorial: "I've Been Thinking of Joining Another Church" (April 20, 1965). *Maynard Shelly, Newton, Kan.*

A binational church

I have very positive memories of my five-year term as editor (1971-76). We pushed the U.S.-Canada relationship issue strongly both in the news section and on the editorial page during these years. A feature article, "A Country Kid Comes to Canada" by Fred Unruh (July 22, 1975), evoked strong reader reaction because of some of its critical comments about the United States. I cut off further letters after having published 15 responses to the article. One reason the General Conference has one of the best relationships of any binational denomination is because we have been ready to talk openly about the extra energy being a binational church requires. It was also a highlight for me to be given time off to make three international trips during my editorship (Middle East, six countries in Africa, and Vietnam). These were learning times for me and hopefully for the readers, too.

Memorable editorial: "The Multidimensional Jesus" (Jan. 16, 1973). *Larry Kehler, Winnipeg*

Affirmation and grace

I don't enjoy selecting one thing above or below others. These are subjective judgments at best.

A "lowlight": A cursory reflection on my decade as editor (1976-1986) comes up with few negatives. I have almost totally positive memories of my experience with *The Mennonite.* If forced, however, I would choose May and June 1978, when, by accident, we ran several articles on homosexuality together in one issue and over several issues. Many readers took this as a signal that we wanted to promote homosexuality, which was not the case at all. That was difficult for people to understand. I realized what had happened and wrote letters of apology for creating this perception.

A highlight: What many people might have expected me to see as the lowlight of my term as editor was just that in terms of my mind and spirit, but it became the highlight. When our son, Glen, died to suicide in 1981, I wrote about it on the editorial page. I wrote of my grief and "darkness." Within about a month, close to 1,000 responses came via letters, phone calls and visits—all sharing words of affirmation and grace. I have never before or after seen the church being the church in quite the same way. While I still mourn the loss of Glen deeply, I have found courage to go on. And even today there is hardly a week that there is not someone who contacts me for copies of those writings or to talk about them because of a tragedy in their lives or in their community.

Memorable editorial: "Make Room for Strangers" (Oct. 14, 1986). *Bernie Wiebe, Winnipeg*

Editors of The Mennonite *reflect on the joyful and the difficult in their tenures, plus a memorable editorial.*

Learning to do church

Although there were 141 other issues of *The Mennonite* in my six years as editor, the one (Feb. 12, 1991) devoted to a conversation about sexuality was the watershed. Our Resolution on Human Sexuality adopted at Saskatoon '86 included a commitment to continue the dialogue. So after getting the green light from conference officials and the magazine's 10 consultants, I invited five writers—spanning the spectrum—to contribute the feature articles for that issue. It ignited a fire storm.

A record number of responses (I cut them off at about 62 letters) to those five articles, and their context in the magazine, came from all over the map. Most painful were the respondents who used the occasion to vent their fury about our conference in general. Most heartening were those who said, in effect, that only one is qualified to judge us, and that One died for us. So we continue, seven years later, to learn how to "do church." Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

God graciously gave me the desire of my heart, to edit *The Mennonite*. I'm grateful.

Memorable editorial: "Hope Is a Thing with Feathers" (March 10, 1987). *Muriel Thiessen Stackley, Pawnee Rock, Kan.*

New blood

I felt privileged to be named editor of *The Mennonite.* As a "convinced" Mennonite, one who did not grow up in a Mennonite setting, I saw the church's faith in me as a sign of willingness to welcome new blood.

Perhaps because I can be a perfectionist (though I've become less so over the years), my disappointments have often been typos we missed in the editing process or, in a special anniversary issue we did in 1985, a cutline that was left off from a photo. I also found difficult some of the process of merging the two magazines.

The highlights of my tenure have been numerous, like a high plateau. I've always been humbled and awed by the loyalty and affirmation from the majority of our readers. And I've retained the sense that many people are praying for our staff, which gives me great strength.

Memorable editorial: "The Horror and the Holy" (Dec. 8, 1992). *Gordon Houser, Newton, Kan.*

16 editors in 112 years

The Mennonite was first published in October 1885 by the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church. It was printed monthly at Quakertown, Pa.

The General Conference meeting at Bluffton, Ohio, in 1893 took action to become the publisher of the paper. It was not until 1902 that the General Conference actually took over the operation of the paper. At this time the paper became a weekly and the office of publication moved to Berne, Ind. Later the magazine was published at Hillsboro, Kan., then at Newton, Kan., where it is currently published. It became a fortnightly in 1982 (26 issues per year) and semimonthly in 1985 (24 issues per year).

During the Depression years, from 1934 to 1936, *The Mennonite* was published jointly with the *Christian Evangel*, the publication of the Central Conference of Mennonites.

The Mennonite has had 16 editors since 1885. Here are all 16 (with their terms):

Nathaniel Bertolet Grubb (d. 1938), October 1885 to October 1891—6 years
Anthony S. Shelly (d. 1928), November 1891 to December 1901—10 years
Harvey G. Allebach (d. 1921), January 1902 to January 1905—3 years
Isaac A. Sommer (d. 1924), January 1905 to December 1911—7 years
Carl Heinrich Anton van der Smissen (d. 1950), January 1912 to December 1915—4 years
Silas Manasses Grubb (d. 1938), January 1916 to December 1936—21 years
John R. Thierstein (d. 1941), January 1937 to May 1941—4 years
Mary Becker Valencia (interim editor), May 1941 to October 1941—5 months
Reynold Weinbrenner, October 1941 to October 1948—7 years
Jacob J. Enz (acting editor), November 1948 to May 1950—2 years
Jesse N. Smucker (d. 1983), June 1950 to January 1961—11 years
Maynard Shelly, February 1961 to July 1971—10 years
Larry Kehler, July 1971 to August 1976—5 years
Bernie Wiebe, August 1976 to August 1986—10 years
Muriel Thiessen Stackley, August 1986 to August 1992—6 years
Gordon Houser, August 1992 to January 1998—5 years

Leaving his mark

In his 34 years as art director for* The Mennonite*, John Hiebert has earned the praise of the five editors he has worked with.

Melanie A. Zuercher

As *The Mennonite* in its "original" incarnation ends, so does an essential but seldom-recognized "institution." One person has made his mark on all but a literal handful of issues since 1963—John Hiebert, who has been the magazine's art director for more than 34 years.

Hiebert left his home community of Mountain Lake, Minn., the night of his high school graduation in 1954 and headed for North Newton, Kan., where he would enter Bethel College in the fall. "I needed a job," he says, and he found one at Mennonite Press (then in North Newton, now east of Newton), at the time a nonprofit company half-owned by Bethel and half by the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Hiebert was following in the footsteps of his older brothers, Harvey (who has just retired as librarian at Bluffton [Ohio] College) and Ken (who teaches graphic design at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia)—both went to Bethel College and worked at Mennonite Press. At Bethel, John sang in the same group as his brothers, and he majored in music for the four quarters he was a student there. "There was no art department to speak of in those days," he says.

At Mennonite Press, Lois Deckert trained Hiebert to run the offset press. As the years went by, he moved on to stripping negatives and doing paste-ups. "There was always something new to do," he says.

In 1963, Robert Regier (who had been a student of art teacher Elsa Kettler at Mountain Lake High School, as were John and Ken Hiebert) left General Conference Mennonite Church offices for graduate school, and Hiebert took over his position as art director for *The Mennonite*.

"I had never done a magazine before," John says, and all his design training had been on the job at Mennonite Press. "Bob had set up a format, and I followed that. It was a fairly simple thing in those days. *The Mennonite* was done on a letterpress, with the copy set in lead type. Any photos or illustrations had to be made into engravings a week ahead of [press] time. We sent them to Sun Engraving in Parsons, Kan., after they were sized and cropped. If you ordered the wrong size, you were out of luck—there was no time to redo."

Until 1982, *The Mennonite* came out once a week. Hiebert has redesigned the magazine three times since he became art director.

> ***"From everlasting to everlasting, there was John."***
> **Muriel Thiessen Stackley**

By 1965, Hiebert was doing design full-time for Mennonite Press. In addition to *The Mennonite*, he has worked on the Foundation Series curriculum, triennial session logos (from 1965 through the one for Bethlehem '83, the first joint General Conference Mennonite Church/Mennonite Church assembly), conference posters and book and bulletin covers.

In 1971, Mennonite Press became a for-profit company. Hiebert is now one of three full-time, plus one part-time, designers. Much of their work now, he says, is "secular—books, advertising and other work for businesses."

A significant transition for Mennonite Press and *The Mennonite* came in February 1992, when the design department switched over to computers. It wasn't easy; in fact, Hiebert's word is "traumatic."

"For 30 years, I had been standing at a pasteup table, and within three weeks, everything was on computers. I had no experience with computers. It caused some nightmares and sleepless nights."

He made the switch, however, and *The Mennonite* and its readers have benefited in terms of monumentally increased design possibilities.

"I've always been free to do just about anything I wanted [with *The Mennonite*]," Hiebert says. "Rarely has anything been turned down, whether good or bad." In fact, at least four of Hiebert's *The Mennonite* covers have won awards from the Associated Church Press.

In 34 years, Hiebert has worked with a number of editors: "Maynard Shelly, Larry Kehler, Bernie Wiebe, Muriel [Thiessen Stackley], Gordon … I've outlasted a lot of them!"

> *"John's ability to make a layout work, to create a flow among the article, photos and typeface, is magical."*
>
> **Gordon Houser**

Melanie Zuercher

'Unfailingly creative': *John Hiebert at work on an issue of* The Mennonite

Those editors are unanimous in their appreciation. Larry Kehler, editor from 1971 to 1976, worked from an office in Winnipeg with Hiebert and associate editor Lois Barrett in Newton. "Both of them were highly competent in their roles, and they were a pleasure to work with," he says. "I think John did a superb job. The overall design of the magazine and the way he laid out the covers and the lead articles has made *The Mennonite* one of the most attractive denominational periodicals then and now."

"Lois Barrett left us in 1977, and Vic Reimer became the new assistant editor. We thought this would be a good time to have our whole leadership team of Vic, John Hiebert and myself attend a workshop on magazine production," says Bernie Wiebe, editor from 1976 to 1986. "In this workshop we were each asked to make proposals and submissions for different elements of a magazine. John Hiebert's work was named the most outstanding in just about every case. When we then together made a proposal for a whole new magazine layout, this too got highest approval from the group. It was clearly due to John's gifts and experience. In my 10 years as editor, it was abundantly clear to me that we had one of the finest graphics people in the church periodical ministry."

Muriel Thiessen Stackley, editor from 1986 to 1992, says, "Some adjectives that come to my mind are 'unfailingly creative' and 'unassuming in his genius.' I always felt like John actually read the copy—he picked up on the content and essence, even in his typeface, of what he was working with.

"He was able to weather the institutional ups and downs over the years at Mennonite Press and able to move with the times as far as what was required of print art and graphic design," she adds. "From everlasting to everlasting, there was John."

Current editor Gordon Houser echoes this praise. "The best design is invisible; it attracts less attention to itself than to the content, which is where editors want readers' attention to be. John's ability to make a layout work, to create a flow among the article, photos and typeface, is magical."

Now 61, Hiebert could retire in 2001. However, he says, "I'd kind of like to set a record by working here 50 years."

What will he miss about designing *The Mennonite*? "Knowing what I'm going to do on Friday," he says.

"But I'm relieved that someone else is doing it for a change," he continues. "It's been a lot of years and it's hard to keep some things fresh and new."

From looking at *The Mennonite* over three-and-a-half decades, we'd hardly have guessed.

Melanie A. Zuercher is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

Letters

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

The most memorable article ever in *The Mennonite* was "The Witness" by Cornelia Lehn. It appeared on page 329 in the May 16, 1961, issue. *Leona Yoder, Middlebury, Ind.*

The two articles you have published that I found extra meaningful were on Jan. 12, 1993, and March 26, 1996. Both have made a real difference to me.

I am not in the M-2 program, since being on a schedule is not working well for me. My heart is with prison ministries.

The article by Willard Unruh, "What I Learned in Prison" (Jan. 12, 1993, issue, page 6), and the illustrations affirmed what I felt my Lord got me interested in. It's being and bringing a "light" into a "dark place" by being a pen pal to the lonely and forgotten. It is an inspiring ministry, an opportunity to extend a hand for our Lord.

I extended my interest in this when in the March 26, 1996, issue you put out an invitation from Michael Ross, a death row inmate in Connecticut ("You Can Bring Light to Death Row," page 10).

Rachel Gross, coordinator of the Death Row Support Project, responded to my interest in adding two more pen pals that wanted a contact—a ray of light in their dark world. It's been a blessing. *Frieda Flaming, Goessel, Kan.*

CHURCH REFLECTED UNFAIRLY

I and others felt that the article "Churches Keeping More Money at Home" (Nov. 25, 1997, issue, page 14) reflected on First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif., unfairly. In contrast to Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D., we are in an area with a tremendous influx of Hispanic peoples. Reedley, population 20,000, is now over 60 percent Hispanic. To relate to this community, we must be in mission, and that costs money.

Our word to church agencies is, You taught us about doing mission at home. You taught us to reach out to our communities in the hopes of planting churches at home. That's what we've done. And it's certainly not that we begrudge the money to the agencies or that we aren't continuing to support them, in our case, to the tune of some $50,000 per year. *Ken Seitz, pastor, First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif.*

THANKS, J.B. MILLER

J.B. Miller's columns will be greatly missed. He has written with clarity about faith, economics and fiscal matters. He has been bold when writing about topics that "good" Mennonites don't address publicly, but which we experience in our daily lives and know in our heart of hearts. His short columns were words of wisdom among many articles touching on financial and economic matters penned by the less reasoned. Thanks, J.B., for all the good counsel over the years. *Ben Sprunger, president, Mennonite Economic Development Associates*

Editor's note: *See J.B. Miller's final column for* The Mennonite *on page 15 of this issue.*

THANKS FOR MANY BLESSINGS

I meant to write you sooner. I have been reading your paper for many years and have appreciated very much the work you have been doing.

I marveled at your insight and knowledge of the many aspects pertaining to our conferences, churches, schools, missions at home and abroad. I have been very much interested in our conference work and our people, but now that I am almost 92 years of age, everything is slowing down. I regret that I have not been able to renew my subscription, but there is only so much that I can read.

Thank you for all you have done for me personally, and for the many blessings that you have brought us. *Henry P. Bartel, Saskatoon*

SAVED DAUGHTER'S LIFE

I believe *The Mennonite* helped save my daughter's life. The Dec. 26, 1995, issue contained an article, "No More Hugs and Kisses." The author, Shelby Mishler Echard, told of her struggle with eating disorders. The issue also included information on identifying and getting help for eating disorders. That issue of *The Mennonite* came at a providential time for us and helped us realize that our daughter was indeed suffering from anorexia nervosa. We were able to find an excellent therapist; our daughter is continuing the long process of recovery. My thanks to *The Mennonite*. *Name withheld by request*

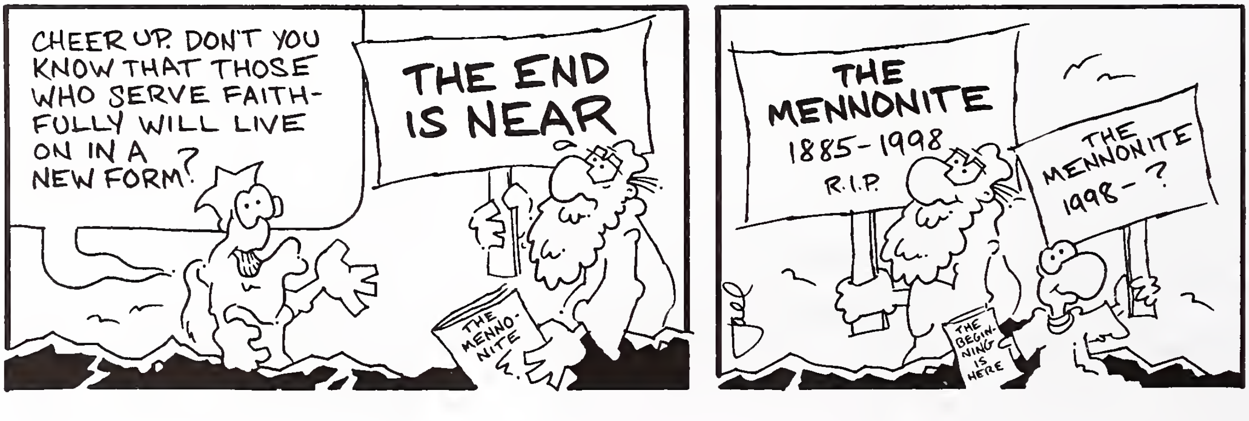
A FINAL EDITOR'S NOTE

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be a new incarnation, a publication combining this magazine and the *Gospel Herald*. That issue will be dated Feb. 17. Letters to *The Mennonite* will continue to be published.

You may send letters to either office of the new magazine: P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, or 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683.

Thanks to all of you who have written.

Pontius' Puddle


CHEER UP. DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THOSE WHO SERVE FAITHFULLY WILL LIVE ON IN A NEW FORM?
?
THE END IS NEAR
THE MENNONITE
THE MENNONITE 1885-1998 R.I.P.
THE MENNONITE 1998-?
THE BEGINNING IS HERE

Learning to pray

Green shoots of prayer are rising

While many encouraging signs of prayer appear among us, we need to keep aware of some fundamental practices.

Marlene Kropf

Marlene Kropf is assistant professor in spiritual formation and worship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

"I feel hopeful because the Lord has plowed a field, harrowed and seeded it. I feel hopeful because green shoots of prayer are rising from the hearts of people everywhere. People are praying in their hearts, and they are taking time to go to quiet places to reflect. They are being drawn inwardly toward [the One] who poured himself out in the service of others." Catherine de Hueck Doherty in *Soul of My Soul*

Although it may have seemed unlikely to happen 20 or 25 years ago, North Americans have once again become deeply interested in prayer. Cover stories in major news magazines focus on the growing interest in prayer at all levels of our culture. Public figures talk openly about their spiritual life. Small prayer groups emerge in offices, neighborhoods and churches. Weekend retreats on the theme of prayer and spirituality attract a growing number of participants.

Where do I see "green shoots rising" among Mennonites? I see them in a retirement community located next door to a church college campus. Retired people have taken on the ministry of praying regularly for college students. I see them in new church building designs that include a room for prayer. I see them in the growing ministry of spiritual direction among Mennonites. Although the number of trained Mennonite spiritual directors in the United States and Canada could have been counted on one hand as recently as 12 or 15 years ago, that number is now estimated to be more than 100 people, with more people receiving training every year.

I see green shoots rising in the spread of "evening song and prayer" services—both on school campuses and in congregations. I see them in night-long intercessory prayer events being planned in communities and congregations. I see them in a growing interest in prayer in corporate worship. People are asking, Why don't we pray more when we gather to worship on Sunday morning?

I see green shoots appearing in other places as well: in parents of preschool children who want to establish family prayer rituals, in catechism classes where young people are being taught to pray, and among pastors who are regularly setting aside one day a month for retreat and prayer. All this evidence of new life and a coming harvest gives cause for rejoicing.

While advice on prayer is available from many sources, not all of it reflects the spirit of Jesus. Some prayer practices appear manipulative or self-serving; others seem connected to an amorphous or vague image of God that bears little resemblance to the God of Scripture.

If there is one thing, however, that gives me pause in this generally encouraging picture, it is the fact that our practices of prayer may not stay firmly attached to biblical roots. While advice on prayer is available from many sources, not all of it reflects the spirit of Jesus. Some prayer practices appear manipulative or self-serving; others seem connected to an amorphous or vague image of God that bears little resemblance to the God of Scripture. If we want our growing interest in prayer to flourish, I encourage us to keep paying attention to the following fundamental practices:

1. Pray the Lord's Prayer regularly. The model prayer that Jesus taught his disciples is a dependable guide for the content and focus of all our praying.

2. Make generous use of Scripture as prayer. Norvene Vest's new book, *Gathered in the Word: Praying the Scripture in Small Groups* (Upper Room, 1996), is an excellent introduction for groups who want to enrich and deepen their common prayer.

3. Become more conscious of the praying that occurs when we sing. If Mennonites pray best when we sing, let us encourage and strengthen this vital practice.

4. Stop and listen. Give God a chance to speak. Let prayer become a dialogue. Most of us are far too dependent on words when we pray and forget that communion may flourish best in silence.

5. Just pray. Jesus promised that the Spirit would teach us all we need to know.

This column marks the end of a five-year writing assignment. It has been a genuine pleasure to write for *The Mennonite* and to receive so many affirming and appreciative comments from readers. I look for many more green shoots of prayer to arise among us. May God bring all our prayer to a bountiful harvest.

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Editor's note: A special thanks to Marlene for helping us think about prayer and for encouraging us to pray. The new *The Mennonite* wants to include articles about prayer. Send us stories of your own or your congregation's experiences with prayer.

Children are people, too

What kind of God do you want your children to believe in?

How we parent our children alters, shapes, colors the human face our adult children will be able to project onto their image of God.

Denise Preller

Most parents, when wrestling with parenting styles or issues, rarely consider the impact their parenting choices will have, and are having, on their children's emerging spirituality. Parents mostly ignore this area and figure it will "come in" like their teeth came in, when their children are ready and when they need it.

As good Christian parents, we are intentional about teaching our children the facts about God, or more specifically the Bible, just as we cover the alphabet and the days of the week. We are much less aware of how we impact their spirituality, their ability to access and communicate with God.

Children have stages of spiritual development that roughly parallel their physical and physiological development. They begin with an egocentric point of view (a point of view in which they are the center of the universe). Gradually, experience teaches them about the existence of others, specifically their parents. As they grow, their awareness of the world expands in ever widening, concentric circles. This expansion ultimately grows large enough to include an understanding of the existence of God. (Some psychologists have calculated that humans do not reach psychological maturity until age 25.)

Denise Preller is director of God's Little Acre Preschool at North Danvers Mennonite Church, Danvers, Ill., where she is a member.

The first person children become aware of outside themselves is the person taking care of them, usually their mom or their dad. That is the first person they will ever love. The parent provides for every physical, emotional and spiritual need of the child. The parent has the power to inflict pain or provide comfort. The parent becomes godlike in the eyes of their children. (Adults who care for their elderly parents can testify to this powerful legacy, as they struggle with seeing Mom and Dad become like children themselves.)

Parents who have provided their children with loving, just parenting that is respectful of them as individuals and as unique creations of God have given them a blessing above all others. For those parents have given their adult children the ability to have free, easy and comfortable access in communicating with God.

Phone conversation: As children's spirituality develops, they project their image of their parents, the first "god" in their lives, onto their adult experience with God. The explanation for this is long and complex, but it has to do with a natural human desire to explain, understand and communicate with our Maker. Imagine God on one end of a phone line and us on the other. Most of us find it much easier to carry on a phone conversation with someone we have already met in person. Putting a human face on God is our way of bridging the gap, and making communication easier. It is a normal part of human spirituality. The drawback of putting a human face on God is that the one true God in the universe, the Host above hosts, becomes burdened (or blessed) with our feeble attempts to describe God with our limited human experience.

How we parent our children alters, shapes, colors the human face our adult children will be able to project onto their image of God.

- If children experience unconditional love from parents, as adults they probably will be able to see God as offering unconditional love.
- If children experience authoritarian parenting, as adults they probably will perceive God as authoritarian, a rule giver.
- If children experience fair and consistent punishment from a parent, as adults they probably will perceive God as being just.
- If children learn they can admit their mistakes to a parent and be forgiven, as adults they will probably be more likely to be able to accept God's grace.
- If children experience arbitrary and harsh punishment from a parent, as adults they probably will perceive God as dispensing harsh and unpredictable judgment.
- If children experience abandonment from a parent, as adults they will probably perceive God as distant or absent.
- If children experience abuse from a parent, as adults they are likely to believe there is no God, for no real God would or could stand by and watch a child be abused.
- If children experience comfort from a parent, as adults they will probably be able to experience God's comfort and healing presence.

Terror: I remember the first day alone with my first-grade class. The door shut behind me and I looked at them all lined up at their desks—scared to death, silent, looking at me. I thought, If I told them to stand up, they would have to stand up. If I told them to write, they would have to write. The seconds passed as I stared at them, and they stared at me. I thought, So this is absolute power? I was surprised to find that I didn't like the giddy feeling all that control was giving me, so I waited to see if it would pass, and it did. What replaced it was terror, terror at the overwhelming responsibility I had accepted in agreeing to teach this whole room full of little souls to read. In that moment I understood the servant-leader model of leadership. What followed my feeling of terror was humility at the trust the school district had shown in me by giving me this responsibility.

I've often thought of that day, and I've wondered about all the teachers and parents who get stuck in the power of the moment. Those absolute-power parents who teach children that adults, and therefore God, are there to provide rules without reasons and orders to be followed. They teach children that adults are to be feared and obeyed and never questioned. Their children learn that the world is full of shoulds and oughts, and God's love is only available to the repentant sinner.

Parents who have provided their children with loving, just parenting that is respectful of them as individuals and as unique creations of God have given them a blessing above all others. For those parents have given their adult children the ability to have free, easy and comfortable access in communicating with God. There could be no bigger blessing. Those parents have helped develop for their children a static-free phone line to God.

We don't have a choice about what kind of God our children will believe in, for God is eternal and unchanging. But we do have a choice about what kind of phone line they will be using when they choose to dial up God.

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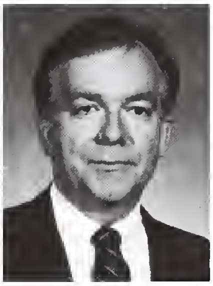
Editor's note: A special thanks to Denise for helping us think about children and helping parents and others relate to children in healthy ways. The new *The Mennonite* wants to include articles about children and parenting. Send us stories of your experiences with parenting.

Fiscal health



J.B. Miller is financial service product manager for AMA Solutions, Inc., in Chicago.

Parting reminders

10 fiscal tips to take with you and remember

J.B. Miller

Saying good-bye has never been easy for me. I remember that as a college student I didn't want my parents standing at the front door waving as I left home, so saying good-bye to *The Mennonite* as I know it is not easy either. I do hope you have gained some good things from reading the "Fiscal Health" column, and just as my parents had reminders for me when I left home, I will leave you with the following reminders.

1. Give generously. One of the most challenging biblical reminders for me is that God loves a cheerful giver. Equally important is the admonition that we are not to give grudgingly.

2. Support your local congregation with financial contributions. Our firstfruits belong to our local congregation. Giving beyond firstfruits goes to other charities that we support.

3. Support Mennonite organizations. Just as our local congregation deserves our support, our Mennonite organizations are worthy of our support as well. Our Mennonite organizations work in credible ways to provide accurate information to us about their mission. We are close enough to many of these organizations to see their work firsthand.

4. Give your time, not just your money. Sometimes it is easier for us to give money and ignore the fact that many of our church and community organizations need our time as well. Time is a valuable commodity; just as being generous with our financial resources is important, giving of our time is equally important.

5. Advocate for the poor. Much of Jesus' teachings address treatment of the poor. Addressing the needs of the poor is truly one of the highest callings we have as Christians. Most of the time it may be difficult to know how to respond to the needs around us, but our church mission programs are great places to start.

6. Work with a competent financial planner. Few of us would be without a family physician to help us take care of our physical needs. A properly trained financial planner can aid us in being good stewards of our resources.

7. Plan for the future. Whether it is retirement planning or sending kids to college, set goals for your financial well-being. Make giving a part of these goals. Since this is the beginning of a new year, now is the time to set goals for 1998.

8. Make a will. If you have not made a will to dispose of your resources, make an appointment today to have that accomplished. All of us need wills and proper estate planning. Remember your favorite charities through a gift of your estate.

9. Invest wisely. Just as it is important to plan for the future, we need to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us. Know what you are investing in before putting your money there. Avoid "get rich quick" schemes, and if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

10. Discover the joy of giving. Many people have discovered the joy of giving, but if you haven't, make this a goal for 1998. Make giving a part of the celebration of worship each Sunday morning. God's promise is that we will be blessed.

I will miss *The Mennonite* as I have known it these last seven years. But I am looking forward to the new publication. I am confident that it will be filled with articles that challenge and stimulate me. I hope the new church periodical will be a place where ideas can be shared and discussed in ways that help all of us grow to be more mature Christians. God's best to each of you.

Inside the news

Theologian John Howard Yoder dies / p. 17

Curriculum responds to children's reality / p. 18

The tools of service / p. 19

Jemaat Kristen Indonesian Maranatha, Reseda, Calif, celebrated its 11th anniversary Nov. 22. Petrus Harayono is pastor.

• • •

The astounding story of reconciliation between former enemies that appeared in *The Mennonite* (Dec. 23, 1997, page 6) isn't quite finished—and its ending may not be an entirely happy one. Doroteo Rivera, licensed for ministry in the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference in September, found out in October that the final appeal of his political asylum case was denied. He was given an order of deportation or 30 days to leave the United States voluntarily. Rivera has now applied for a religious worker visa, which would allow him to stay in the United States for three years, after which he would have to return to El Salvador for two years before re-entering the United States. David Morrow, pastor at Warden (Wash.) Mennonite Church, says they should know within six months whether Rivera has been approved for the visa. Warden shares its building with Mision Evangelica Manantiales de Vida Eterna, which Rivera pastors. Rivera was denied asylum because the 1992 peace accords in his home country of El Salvador meant that he was no longer in danger from the government or any organized guerrilla group. However, says Morrow, Rivera fears his life would be in danger because of individuals with personal vendettas against him from the years of war (part of that time, Rivera was a soldier). Morrow is confident that Rivera will be able to obtain the religious worker visa; two other pastors in the Pacific Northwest conference have this visa. PNMC is helping Rivera apply for the visa, and individuals in the conference are also raising money to pay the legal fees. *Valerie Weaver*

News

MCC to aid victims of Chiapas violence

San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico—On Dec. 22, 1997, 60 paramilitaries associated with Mexico's ruling political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) massacred 45 displaced indigenous people who had sought refuge from earlier violence in the Chanalho area of the Chiapas highlands.

The attack was the worst single act of violence in the state since the January 1994 uprising of Zapatista Indian rebels against the government.

Although radio reports immediately after the incident said most of the victims were Zapatista supporters, both Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) say many of them were members of a peasant organization called Sociedad Civil Las Abejas (The Bees). The group's views and politics are similar to those of the Zapatista guerrillas, but its members do not support armed struggle.

The victims of the Dec. 22 massacre were attending Mass in the remote Chiapas mountain village of Acteal just before midday on Dec. 22, when the paramilitaries burst in, firing automatic weapons indiscriminately, survivors said.

Witnesses said the refugees were attacked from several sides to prevent their escape. The Mexican Red Cross reported 45 deaths, including nine men, 21 women, 14 children and one infant. Nineteen others were wounded.

The massacre occurred as part of a wave of violence in the Chenalho area in recent months, resulting in dozens of deaths, numerous wounded and thousands of displaced people. While the killings are blamed on well-armed paramilitaries affiliated with Mexico's ruling party, human rights monitors say the violence often takes place within sight of—and sometimes with the outright support of—the Chiapas state police.

The motive for the Dec. 22 attack

Holy Innocents of Acteal

Following are excerpts from the homily given by Father Oscar Salinas, vicar of the Diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, on Sunday, Dec. 28, 1997, and translated by Duane Ediger of Dallas, Texas.

There are some important things to know about the group "Las Abejas" (The Bees), to fully appreciate the depth of their sacrifice. … Attentive readers of the Gospels, committed followers of Jesus, they made a choice they never reconsidered. … They said, as many other Mexicans have, "We are in absolute agreement with each and every cause in the Zapatista struggle. … All the same, we cannot agree with the chosen method … of taking up arms."

…They are simply people who have believed without wavering that the struggle for life is waged with armaments of life. … They said, "We are prepared to die for this cause but not to kill." And when their time came to demonstrate this, they did. On the day of their burial in Acteal, as we bit our tongues to hold back our rage, a friend commented to me in a low voice, "What cowards the assassins! Why did they choose this weak, defenseless group to kill? Why didn't they attack an armed group capable of defending itself?"

I did not respond, but I kept thinking about this. Today I think I understand a little better. Las Abejas are by no means a weak and defenseless group, though they may have been seen that way by their paramilitary attackers; neither is any group armed only with the force of truth. … A group like this … is the most dangerous and threatening to defenders of the system, because it more effectively unmasks their injustice.

was not immediately clear, but there have been violent clashes in recent weeks in the area around Chenalho between paramilitaries backed by the PRI and Indian supporters of the Zapatista rebels who launched the 1994 revolt.

PRI national president Mariano Palacios Alcocer denied his party was in any way involved in the attacks, criticizing "simplistic explanations" of the massacre.

But the Mexican Front for Human Rights said the PRI state government in Chiapas should be put on trial for the massacre because it was responsible for all the recent violence there.

At the end of November 1997, several thousand Indians fled to the mountains around Chenalho, braving cold and hunger to escape a wave of paramilitary and police violence that claimed at least 10 lives.

"We are really concerned about the growing tension in Chiapas," says Sara King, MCC Mexico co-director. "The poorest of the poor are getting hit, and we don't see much response from the government. And I am still trying to understand the hatred that would drive these 60 men to arm themselves, enter a church and shoot women and children in the back as they prayed. Lord help us all."

Mennonite Central Committee will provide an immediate $1,500 U.S./ $2,100 Cdn. to help supply food, clothing and medicine to some of the 2,200 families displaced by violence in rural Chiapas.

The aid will be distributed through existing women's and religious groups already assisting the "internal refugees." MCC worker J. Eduardo Rodriguez, who lives in San Cristobal, the capital of Chiapas state, will monitor the distribution.

Increasing numbers of indigenous people in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state, are leaving their villages, seeking refuge in San Cristobal, due to violence directed at them. *From reports by CPT, MCC and Reuters*

Theologian John H. Yoder dies

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—John Howard Yoder, a leading Mennonite theologian, died Dec. 30, 1997, of a heart attack. At the time of his death, Yoder was serving on the faculty of the department of theology at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind.

Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), said, "His central contribution was to show the Mennonite church and the wider Christian church how the life and teachings of Jesus are relevant in a broken and violent world."

Willard M. Swartley, AMBS dean, said, "His contributions were enormous in theological thought across all denominations. He was an original scholar, creative and penetrating. His seminal contribution was in showing the significance of social ethics and to take seriously faithful discipleship."

A prolific writer, Yoder's works include *The Politics of Jesus*, first published in 1972, *The Priestly Kingdom* and *What Would You Do?* [A review of Yoder's most recent book, *For the Nations*, appears in this issue, page 22.)

John H. Yoder

Yoder received his bachelor's degree from Goshen (Ind.) College in 1947 and went to Europe to direct the relief efforts of Mennonite Central Committee after World War II. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Basel in Switzerland in 1962. He was on the faculty of AMBS 1965-1984 and served as president of Goshen Biblical Seminary 1970-73. He joined the faculty of the University of Notre Dame in 1977 and was named a Fellow of the Notre Dame Institute of International Peace Studies.

Yoder had celebrated his 70th birthday on Dec. 29 with all his children present except a daughter who lives in Egypt. The next morning, a colleague at Notre Dame found him ill in his office, and Yoder was transported to St. Joseph Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead in the early afternoon. *Mary E. Klassen with reports by* The Elkhart Truth *and the* South Bend Tribune

On May 8, 1997, Jacqueline and Linden Thompson of Washington, D.C., were the first African-Americans to give birth to sextuplets. One was stillborn. There was only one other recorded birth of sextuplets in the United States in 1997. Yet, unlike with the McCaughey septuplets in Iowa, the birth of the Thompson children stirred no media interest and no offers of community help. The McCaughey septuplets' birth did produce some local attention for the Thompsons and they have received some assistance as a result, including being able to move out of their one-bedroom duplex unit into a three-bedroom apartment. ***Pacific News Service***

• • •

For the first time in the history of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement, its baptized followers number more than a million. The Mennonite and Brethren in Christ World Directory 1998, published by Mennonite World Conference, shows 1.06 million baptized members in 192 conferences in 60 countries. The 1994 census showed, for the first time, more Anabaptist-related Christians in the southern part of the globe than in the north. That trend is continuing, says MWC executive secretary Larry Miller. Africa, Asia, Central and South America are home to 582,000 members, while members in North America and Europe number 477,000, according to the new world directory. This kind of thing is happening to other Christian world families as well, says Miller. Still, the six countries with the largest memberships have not changed in the past four years. These countries, with their current membership estimates, are the United States, 287,345; Congo (former Zaire), 175,837; Canada, 128,633; India, 87,466; Indonesia, 62,823; Ethiopia, 57,011. Copies of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ World Directory 1998 are available from Mennonite World Conference, 421 S. Second St., Suite 600, Elkhart, IN 46516-3243, for $2.50 U.S./$3.50 Cdn. ***Marshall V. King***

As Christianity burgeons in Africa, churches there are sending thousands of missionaries overseas. African ministries are springing up in the United States because "the church in Africa is on fire, while the church in [the United States] is, for the most part, losing its zeal," says Ivey Williams, pastor of a Tallahassee, Fla., congregation established by the Nigerian-based Redeemed Christian Church of God. (*Gospel Herald*)

• • •

Santa Claus and his "Elves for Peace" visited a Toys "R" Us store in suburban Denver on Dec. 7, 1997, but Santa's festive mood quickly changed when he saw the violent video and computer games and other war toys on the store's shelves. Santa listed the evils of violent toys while the elves handed out fliers encouraging customers to express their concerns to Toys "R" Us headquarters. After store workers insisted that Santa leave, he and the elves took some of the violent toys, handed them in at the service desk and asked that this store take the lead in removing such items from Toys "R" Us shelves. Outside, Santa and the elves joined supporters in an Elfin Choir singing adapted Christmas carols with messages warning against violent toys. The elves and others distributed nearly 500 fliers to customers. Most people supported the witness, although a few were hostile. The message that "violence is not child's play" reached a wide audience as Denver's leading TV news station aired a favorable segment on the evening news. The event was part of Colorado Christian Peacemaker Teams reservists' training. A similar event Dec. 6 organized by CPT reservist Pat Cameron drew 20 CPT supporters at a Toys "R" Us store in Wichita, Kan.

• • •

The 111th annual World Day of Prayer sponsored by Church Women United will be March 6. Christian women from Madagascar wrote the worship service for this year, available from CWU at 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 500, New York, NY 10015, 1-800-CWU-5551 (press 2).

Curriculum responds to children's reality

Guatemala City—Mennonites in Central and South America are taking the initiative to produce Sunday school material that both reflects an Anabaptist perspective and fits their context.

Twenty people gathered Oct. 25-30, 1997, in the mountains outside this city for a curriculum-writing workshop. Their focus was on material for Central American children ages 11 to 13 who attend Mennonite churches.

Janet Breneman

Open eyes: *Gabriela Ochoa of Guatemala City and other participants in a curriculum-writing seminar work on Sunday school material for Latin American children.*

This effort was part of a larger four-year project to create an Anabaptist children's curriculum for all of Latin America. Project sponsors include the Latin American Consultation of Anabaptist churches; the inter-Mennonite Council of International Ministries; local Mennonite conferences; SEMILLA, the Central American Anabaptist seminary by extension, with headquarters in Guatemala City, and CLARA, the Latin American Center for Anabaptist Resources, based in Colombia.

The initiative developed in response to growing requests from Latin American churches, says Janet Breneman, Eastern Mennonite Missions worker in Guatemala City and project co-coordinator. For years, she says, the churches have been asking for material that is easy to use for a majority of teachers with very little academic or formal biblical preparation, and low cost so that even churches with few economic means could afford them. They also want curriculum that "presents the biblical story from an Anabaptist perspective and relates it to real life for children in the Latin American context," she says.

Project co-coordinator Helen Dueck, long-term worker in South America with her husband, Henry, for the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, has heard the same need expressed repeatedly over the years in several Latin American Anabaptist consultations, Breneman says.

"Helen and I are both really clear about only wanting to be coordinators and facilitators of the project, and that the material will be written and created by Latin Americans," she adds. "The dream is ours only in the sense that we have heard the need expressed so many times and are here at this moment, and have been in South and Central America for a good many years, and now have the privilege of helping it happen."

At the October workshop, mornings were dedicated to classes in teaching methodology, Anabaptist and biblical guidelines and basic grammar and writing techniques, and afternoons to the writing itself.

"I have been in many workshops, but none where I worked this hard," said Pedro Calix, a pastor from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, at the end of the week.

There were several sessions on the use of drama and educational games. One day, workshop participants saw a drama by a group of street children portraying the life of one of the young men who had lost the use of his leg in a gang fight.

"He played himself in the drama," says Breneman. "It was extremely well done, and heartrending. It helped writers see drama as a learning technique, and it also opened our eyes to the realities many young children face daily, and to which the curriculum needs to respond."

Earlier, workshop participants had visited Sunday school classes in three city Mennonite churches for conversations with children ages 11 to 13. "These were excellent opportunities for listening to children express aspects they would like to see in a curriculum prepared for them," Breneman says.

Breneman and Helen Dueck hope the project will be finished in 2001.

There are two other writing groups. One is in the Andean Zone, where the initial curriculum-writing workshop took place in Colombia in January 1997. Writers there will focus on 8- to 10-year-olds. The other group is in the Southern Cone, where last April and May in Uruguay two women, guided by Helen, wrote one semester of material for 5- to 7-year-olds.

"We hope that all the first year of material prepared in each region will be ready in a trial form for distribution at the Latin American consultation planned for February 1999 in Paraguay, so that it can be tested in the churches that year," says Breneman. The curriculum is being prepared in three three-year cycles.

How it is to be printed and distributed is "still not clear," she says.

The project's coordinators and writers "are trying to follow a more liberating, participatory [teaching] methodology that is more true to current Latin American educational methods in which children are encouraged to learn through discovery, wonder, questions, story, hands-on experience, educational games and activities, active participation," says Breneman.

"We would like to see some of the educational experience leave the four-walled classroom and spread to activities in the communities where children live. In the little bit of writing that's been done so far, I have been amazed at the creative ideas that came out. The writers are teachers in the schools and Sunday schools and people with biblical training, and they bring a wealth of ideas from their own experience that have already been tested in other settings. That is really exciting!" *Melanie A. Zuercher with a report by Janet Breneman*

The tools of service

Kevin King

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Jenny Bishop of Bedminster, Pa., a member of Doylestown (Pa.) Mennonite Church, works with children at Republican Orphanage No. 1 in Vladikavkaz, southern Russia. Bishop is one of two Mennonite Central Committee SALT (Serving and Learning Together) program participants at the orphanage.

The orphanage received MCC material resources in the summer of 1997, and another shipment was due to arrive this month. MCC shipped a container of materials including meat (beef, turkey, pork); used clothing and shoes; soap, detergent and lice shampoo; sports equipment; school, health, newborn and sewing kits, and some 1,500 pounds of hand tools to two organizations in Russia and the Ukraine in mid-November 1997.

Hand tools are a new material resource item for MCC, and tool kits may become a staple, says MCC material resources manager Kevin King. Such kits can provide "starter tools" for people establishing themselves in mechanical or carpentry trades, he says.

The national office of Benedictines for Peace has created a living will for people to designate that, in case of their murder, they do not want the assailant sentenced to death. The document is not legally binding, but it serves to express a person's wishes to family, attorneys and the courts. *Newton Area Peace Center*

• • •

The Games Project, an initiative of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and Christian Peacemaker Teams, has released its first top 10 list of recommended nonviolent computer games for children and youth. Included are games that are challenging, fun and demonstrate a respect, rather than a disregard, for life, says project coordinator Esther Epp-Tiessen. The Games Project has been gathering reviews of a wide variety of games over the past year, with some 200 games reviewed to date. Games are evaluated according to three criteria: social value (level and realism of violence and the way in which women and minorities are portrayed), play value and technical merit. The games chosen for TGP's top 10 generally include high ratings in all three areas. They are Bust a Move 2, Tetris, Theme Park, Absolute Pinball, Myst, Nascar, Simcity 2000, The Incredible Machine, Front Page Sports: Golf and Earthworm Jim. Byron Weber Becker, a computer science professor at the University of Waterloo, Ont., has been providing technical support to TGP. The project recently completed a curriculum and workshop outline for 12- to 14-year-olds on a Christian perspective toward computer entertainment, to be published by Faith & Life Press this spring. To order this call Faith & Life Press at 1-800-743-2474. To access the top 10 list, along with detailed descriptions of each game, go to TGP's site on the World Wide Web: www.sentex.net/~games. Paper copies can be obtained by calling MCC Ontario at (519) 745-8458 or e-mailing games@sentex.net or mccon@mennonitecc.on.ca.

A gathering to close the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade for Churches in Solidarity with Women in Church and Society is being planned for Aug. 26-30 at the University of Guelph, Ont. Participants in the meeting, called "Daring to Hope/Oser L'Espoir," will celebrate the achievements of the decade and strategize about how to move forward. Contact Registrar, Daring Hope, Ecumenical Decade Coordinating Group, 40 St. Clair Ave. E., Ste. 201, Toronto, ON M4T 1M9. (*Canadian Mennonite*)

• • •

Although for many years students have transferred from Hesston (Kan.) College, a Mennonite Church institution, to the General Conference Mennonite Church's Bethel College in North Newton, seven miles away, this fall for the first time in recent years Hesston headed Bethel's list of feeder schools. That means more students are coming to Bethel from Hesston than from any other two-year or four-year college or high school. *June Krehbiel*

Altona Mennonite Church, Altona, Man., a General Conference congregation of 100+ members, seeks a full-time **pastor** to begin serving as early as summer 1998. Desired qualifications: solid theological knowledge and training, a commitment to Anabaptist beliefs, previous pastoral experience, teaching and preaching gifts, and a good facilitator with the ability to relate to a wide range of people.

Applications and resumes may be sent to **David Campbell, Pastoral Search Committee Chair, Box 1584, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; (204) 324-8271.**

Hinkletown Mennonite School invites applicants for the position of **administrator** starting July 1998. Qualifications include master's degree and at least six years of successful administrative and/or teaching experience. Training in school administration and possession of teaching certificate preferred. HMS serves 200 students in grades K-8 in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. For more information about the school, you may visit the student-produced web site at **http://home.ptdprolog.net/~hmsstaff.**

Please send resume to **Jim Shenk, 37 Third St., Akron, PA 17501** by **March 1.**

Howard Zehr (MCC)

This is the cover of Mennonite Central Committee's 1998 wall calendar, focusing on "All God's Children." Each photo of the calendar features an MCC-supported program for children. The two girls above are at the Hanbury Children's Home in Jamaica, where MCC young people serve through the SALT (Serving and Learning Together) program. As a bonus, the calendar includes an extra day; by mistake, Sept. 31 appears. To order contact MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

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Pong quit school in grade six and enjoyed getting into fights. Later he became a bodyguard for a house of prostitution and ended up in jail. After a paralyzing accident, he met Eastern Mennonite Mission workers who brought him to Christ. Now, from his wheelchair, Pong works in partnership with COM mission worker Pat Houmphan, leading others to Christ in Thailand.

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Reviews

BOOKS

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical *by John Howard Yoder (Eerdmans, 1997, 251 pages, $28 U.S.)*

Reviewed by Peter Dula, Atglen, Pa.

John Howard Yoder's new collection of essays comes three years after his book *The Royal Priesthood*, in which those who had paid close attention to the trajectory of Yoder's work over the years found nothing new. *For the Nations*, however, is made up of mostly unpublished material. Many of the essays demonstrate Yoder at his most creative and incisive. Brought together, these essays represent his most important work in 13 years.

The title is instructive. Drawn from Isaiah 49, it makes a clear statement about how Yoder wishes to be understood. He is not simply the quaintly brilliant sectarian to be read, admired and then dismissed as irrelevant. Unlike his friend and one-time colleague, Stanley Hauerwas (who once wrote a book called *Against the Nations*), Yoder is no longer content to accept the academy's pigeonhole "sectarian."

'Alternative community': Though Yoder's interest in Judaism is well known at least since his 1982 Menno Simons lectures at Bethel College, his work on Judaism as a source of Christian ethics has been largely inaccessible. It is the great virtue of *For the Nations* that it includes three marvelous essays on this theme. With them, Yoder is able to do three closely related things. First, he finds in diaspora Judaism a helpful model of the church as "alternative community," a theme that has preoccupied him for 40 years. Second, he locates the early church's ethic not simply in the sayings of Jesus but in the Jewish tradition. Third, he finds new resources for his battle with the "public theologians."

Also of great import in the book are two essays on the civil rights movement, one from 1963 ("The Racial Revolution in Theological Perspective") and another from 1981 ("The Power Equation, the Place of Jesus, and the Politics of King"). For many enthusiastic readers of *The Politics of Jesus*, Yoder's chapter therein on "Revolutionary Subordination" seemed disturbingly conservative. Though not all readers will be satisfied, these two essays serve to clarify many questions concerning Yoder's position on nonviolence and the nature of the believing community's suffering better than any previously published work on the subject.

Newcomers to Yoder's writing will welcome the careful cross-referencing in his footnotes. Older essays in the book carefully note the numerous places where Yoder returned to those themes in later essays and books. Likewise, the recent essays note connections to previous works. This is not the vanity of an elderly scholar but the most helpful sort of bibliography.

All the essays in *For the Nations* share a common thread that links the book with Yoder's other work: the refusal to accept the too-simple polarities of the standard debates over the church's stance in the world. It has been Yoder's great gift to late 20th-century theology to consistently question those polarities with remarkable precision of mind.

Goshen College seeks applicants for a tenure-track position in **social work** beginning August 1998. Qualifications include master's degree in social work, a minimum of two years post-master's experience in direct practice and an earned doctorate in social work or related field. ABD candidates will be considered. Also required is demonstrated competence in teaching generalist social work content and content on women's issues and diverse populations. Responsibilities include teaching in the areas of human behavior and social work practice, teaching elective courses in the applicant's field(s) of expertise, field liaison activity, and academic and professional advising of students. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Faculty members are expected to share that commitment.

Send letter of application, curriculum vita and at least three professional references to **Dr. Paul Keim, Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; (219) 535-7503; fax (219) 535-7060**; e-mail **dean@goshen.edu**. Applications are encouraged through the Goshen College web site at **www.goshen.edu**. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

First Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan., a medium, active congregation serving a small-town community, seeks a full-time **pastor** with a commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and a vision for outreach. Experience in leadership and administration beneficial.

Applicants are invited to submit resume and request for information to **Jim Gehring, Pastoral Search Chair, Box 195, Moundridge, KS 67107; (316) 345-8605.**

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As a subscriber to *Gospel Herald* or the former *The Mennonite*, you will automatically begin receiving the new *The Mennonite*, debuting February 17. It will be a bright, new resource for our unified church and your Christian life.

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Editorial

A way to talk and listen

For these 112 years *The Mennonite* has been a place for readers to gather and consider the events and issues among us. The magazine has served as "an arena of family dialogue," as Robert Kreider writes in our lead feature article (page 3). In doing so it has helped carry on an important tradition passed on by our Anabaptist forebears, that of being a community of discernment.

One of the aspects of Anabaptist theology that drew me to the Mennonite church was its emphasis on the corporate nature of the Christian life. My study of the Bible showed me that our modern sense of the isolated individual was a foreign concept to biblical writers. That the Christian life was primarily an individual relationship with Christ did not fit with my understanding of Scripture.

The Anabaptist writers I read placed a greater emphasis than other writers on the church as the body of Christ. Daniel Liechty writes in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality* (Paulist Press, 1994) that "the experience of community was so strong among Anabaptists that they were persuaded that it was only in community that one could be a Christian."

Such a concept not only fits well with Scripture, it also speaks to a deep longing of people today for connection. Liechty writes that the "quest for communites of meaning and value, in the face of the atomizing forces of technology and capitalist individualism, is one of the forces which attract us to the … spiritual disciplines of the past."

One of those spiritual disciplines, a communal one that is desperately needed today, is mutual discernment. The early Anabaptist communities followed "the rule of Christ" from Matthew 18:15-20, which concerns discernment of wrongdoing by members of the community. Other uses of mutual discernment include helping one another follow in the way that God is leading them.

A variety of ideas: How does a magazine like *The Mennonite* fit in with such goals? Think of your church magazine as a way to do mutual discernment on a scale much broader than the local congregation. In its pages you learn about what's going on in other parts of the country, the continent and the world. You encounter a variety of ideas and experiences: some that you like, some that challenge or force you to see an issue from a different perspective, and some that perhaps make you angry, which gives you an opportunity to practice self-control and/or conflict resolution. You also have the opportunity to speak your mind, raise the issues that are important to you.

Throughout its history, *The Mennonite* has provided a way for the broader Mennonite community to talk and listen to one another. It has always been an imperfect vehicle, but by being a place to air concerns, it has helped bring a measure of peace and clarity to Mennonites.

Some might argue that it just stirs up trouble and muddies the water. But if the water—not just your local pond but the larger sea—is muddy, isn't it best to know that and work together on making it clearer?

With this issue we celebrate that work of community building that has been the primary goal of *The Mennonite*. We also urge that such work continue, in the new *The Mennonite* and elsewhere. To be healthy Christians, we need to be in a healthy Christian community. Pray that God's Spirit enliven these pages and our life together, that we all may reflect the life of our Lord. *Gordon Houser*

Farewell and welcome

In our culture, we use some gestures for saying farewell and for welcoming others. The girl on the cover holds a bouquet of flowers, which we present as a gesture of good-bye. But she could also be welcoming you home.

With this issue we say good-bye to more than 112 years of continuous publication of *The Mennonite*. That's a long legacy. Yet we also ask you readers to look forward to a new incarnation of *The Mennonite*. Look inside this back cover for some details about what to expect in several weeks, when the first issue of a new magazine comes out under the banner of *The Mennonite*.

We bid you farewell, with some tears in our eyes as we think back on the many years of publication and the many lives this magazine has touched. At the same time we say welcome, with our sleeves rolled up and sweat on our brows as we begin work on a new *The Mennonite*. *gh*

Recyclable

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